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FAMOUS CRIMES

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THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK.

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THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

Unmasked after Two Centuries of Mystery.

"To the Public Mystery is ever more attractive than Truth. Legends are History to the People; and especially those which filter through their instincts, prejudices, and passions. You will never convince them of their Falsehood."

—VICTORIEN SARDOU, Preface to "Legends of the Bastille."

ABOUT no figure in the world's history has so seemingly impenetrable a cloak of fascinating mystery been cast as that which—so far as nine-tenths of the romance-reading public are concerned—still envelops the personality of the "Man in the Iron Mask." After two centuries of analytical biographical research on the one hand, and ingenious romance-weaving on the other, have we yet been brought face to face with this remarkable personage? The doubt reflected in that question remains unsolved in the majority of minds, notwithstanding the rival claims of two living writers of acknowledged authority and eminence to have torn the visor from the countenance of the remarkable being whose identity has exercised the minds and imaginations of the curious and the romantic throughout the universe for two hundred years. Both of these literary detectives are Frenchmen, though, oddly enough, they both bear names of Teutonic origin.

Supporting the deliberate declaration of M. Funck-Brentano that he has solved the problem beyond all cavil, Victorien Sardou, among the greatest of modern French dramatists, assures us that that author has stripped off this famous mask—which, by the way, was of velvet—and shown us the face which the world has been so anxious to see—the face of Mattioli, the confidant of the Duke of Mantua, and the betrayer of both his master and Louis XIV. "M. Funck-Brentano's demonstration," adds the veteran playwright, "is so convincing as to leave no room for doubt." And yet M. Sardou is bound to confess that he "dares not hope that the good public will accept this conclusion as final. To the public," he is fain to admit, "mystery has ever been, and will ever be, more attractive than truth."

M. Jung, a distinguished French staff officer, has satisfied a small section of those absorbed in the solution of the mystery, as well as himself, that the wearer of the Mask was a criminal who played a part in one of the numerous poisoning plots which disgraced the reign of Louis XIV. He identifies him with "a Gentleman of Lorraine," who belonged to a murderous band of conspirators against the life of the King, and who, being arrested at Peronne, was lodged in the Bastille in 1673, and borne thence to the Pignerol prison. But ingenious though the exposition of his theory unquestionably is, M. Jung has failed to convince the world that he has unmasked the man whom half the civilised world still believe to have been the twin-brother of Louis XIV. We propose to deal with these two most recent attempts to uplift the veil of anonymity which has hidden the identity of the "Man in the Iron Mask," when we have examined the evidence on the subject relied upon by other and earlier seekers of support for their theories.

The legend of the kinship of the man of mystery with Louis XIV—most popular of all the legends—owes its origin to no less eminent a personage than Voltaire. He it was who gave form and life to the vague traditions which had been current for half a century concerning the Mask. That an important individual had been spirited away by the myrmidons of Louis XIV., among the best-known of whose foibles it was to isolate human beings and keep them immured and masked, had, however, for five decades been something more than a legend. That this particular prisoner was a person of considerable importance is established by the fact that the question of his identity has never been allowed to rest even unto this day. Guesses rational and irrational had been hazarded by all sorts and conditions of officials before the bitter little author of the French Revolution stepped into the breach with his vindictive theory.

The loose morality of Louis left the door open to the wildest suggestions as to the persons of whom he desired to lose sight for ever. Among these was the gentle Comte Vermandois, the offspring of the miserable monarch's only real passion, Louise de la Vallière. The detectives of the time, however, found no difficulty in disposing of that romantic "clue"; and their judgment was confirmed by the fact that Vermandois died in 1683. The unimpeachable death certificate of the "Man in the Iron Mask" is dated 1703. But the suggestion was too good to be neglected by the author of the "Philosophic Dictionary," who saw in it an excellent opportunity to strike a blow at the Bourbons; and this is how he struck the blow. Writing in his most seductive style, Voltaire convinced the discontented public, whom he eventually urged to revolution, that the persecuted Mask was a person of exalted rank. He painted realistic word-pictures of the deference with which he was treated by his gaolers, who were ordered to uncover in his presence. He detailed the luxurious character of his prison life, and described with his inimitably graphic pen his pathetic but futile attempts to communicate the story of his wrongs to the outer world. He is represented by the venomous enemy of royalty as inscribing messages on the plate and linen supplied to him by his persecutors, and throwing them through the grating of the window of his cell on

the Island of Ste. Marguerite, whence he was finally transferred to his dungeon in the Bastille. A silver salver, on which an appeal for help was scratched, was picked up by a fisherman, and carried to M. Saint Mars, the governor of the gaol, to whose rigid care the mysterious one was committed.

"Have you read this?" thundered the governor of Ste. Marguerite.

"Sire, I cannot read," was the reply.

"Lucky for you!" was the ominous answer.

A few days later a white linen shirt was taken out of the moat surrounding the island prison-house, in which it was floating. It was covered with small, close writing. One of the warders came upon one of the officials as he was perusing this strange document. The shirt was at once seized, and the whole incident reported to St. Mars. The man who had "perused the shirt" was found dead on the following morning.

Voltaire, one may rest assured, made the most of this part of his case, and convinced his readers that some hideous conspiracy underlaid the deprivation of the "Man in the Iron Mask" of his liberty. He produced testimony to prove that the prisoner was forbidden upon pain of death to remove his visor. He told with exquisite skill a story of refined persecution. And when he had allowed his narrative to sink deeply into the minds and pervade the imaginations of his readers, he boldly published the statement that the rigorously watched captive was none other than the illegitimate son of the wily Cardinal Mazarin and Anne of Austria, the mother of Louis XIV. Voltaire had achieved his object in throwing doubt upon the legitimacy of the reigning Bourbons and in further besmirching the reputation of a Prince of the Church.

The hideous injustice of this man's imprisonment for no more heinous crime than that of being the uterine brother of Louis XIV. was denounced with all the rancorous vigour of which Voltaire the remorseless was master. The pathetic figure of the wronged aristocrat was made to stand out in bold relief from the background of libertinism, intrigue, and treachery which characterised the age in which he lived and suffered. Much was made of the dignity of his dealings with his gaolers. Unmistakable emphasis was laid upon the brutality of compelling him to hide his face for ever from his fellow-men. The legend that the mask was of iron died hard, if, indeed, it be quite dead even now. The acrimonious little philosopher of Ferney set agoing a story which travelled down a century and a-half.

This legend gave birth to another and equally execrable theory. This found vent in the "Memoirs of Richelieu," where the mysterious captive was discovered to be the actual twin-brother of Louis XIV., born a few hours later than the monarch, and put out of sight by the Cardinal-Minister, Mazarin, to avoid the evils of a disputed succession. Both of these narratives have been literally riddled by the historical investigation of the mystery. These and other equally sensational theories had been all but demolished, when the great Magician of Romance, Alexandre Dumas, burst in all his glory upon the scene and breathed new life into them. Fascinated by the glittering imagery of the dazzling author of "Le Vicomte de Bragelonne," those who were on the eve of abandoning these theories renewed their belief in the persecuted twin brother of Louis XIV. Once again there stood before them, living, moving, and having his being, the figure of the martyred prince, suffering everything, resenting nothing. Again they saw in imagination the victim of an unnatural brother's foul machinations. No greater tribute has been paid to the overwhelming genius of Dumas than the revival of this legend, which is not without its champions, even in the light of the later and more convincing criticism, still half-credited by the multitude.

A fantastical variation of this version conducts us even farther into the realm of romance. It bids us believe that the real Louis was consigned to a cell in Ste. Marguerite, whilst his illegitimate brother by Mazarin, born two years earlier, was declared King. The distinguished and gentle-souled prisoner, the author of this story tells us, fell deeply in love with the pretty daughter of one of the turnkeys and married her. The child of this union was sent to Corsica, where he was handed over to his guardians as coming of "a good stock"—Buonaparte. A descendant of this scion of an aristocratic race, we are asked to believe, subsequently terrorised the world, and wreaked a stupendous revenge on monarchy in the person of Napoleon I.! At one period of his dominance the redoubtable "little corporal" was not inclined to discourage the legend, which can at least lay claim to the questionable merit of being ingenious. This is extending the long

"Have you read this?"

arm of coincidence with a vengeance—absolutely with a vengeance.

The theorists gave the credulous no rest, as we have already said, in this matter. In 1759, M. Lagrange-Chaucel wrote a work which had considerable vogue, in which the author strove to prove that the masked martyr was none other than the Duc de Beaufort, a hero of the Fronde, the party who waged a sort of bloody guerilla warfare on the side of the King and his party. Readers of Dumas will be acquainted with some of the exploits of this brave, if eccentric, warrior. Unfortunately, however, for this theory, the fire-eating duc left this vale of tears in the year 1689, whilst, as most of the theorists agree, the "Man in the Iron Mask" ceased to trouble his gaolers in 1703. M. St. Foix devoted many pages of close print to proving that St. Mars's prisoner was the rebellious Duke of Monmouth, the half-hearted son of Charles II. of England and Lucy Waters. Since the head of the rebel fell beneath a blow of the executioner's axe a few years prior to the decease of the captive of Ste. Marguerite, the bottom was soon knocked out of that narrative. Another favourite of the theorists was that the victim was to be found in the astute Fouquet, the minister of Louis XIV., who

perished ignominiously twenty-three years prior to the demise of "the confidant of the Duke of Mantua."

It is impossible to withhold one's admiration from the genius who found it easy to convince himself that the masked man was a son of Oliver Cromwell, or to ignore the fertility of the imagination which discovered in him one Avedick, an Armenian Patriarch, who was detected by the Jesuits in the act of betraying Louis XIV. to his Italian enemies. This "discovery" was hopelessly discounted by another—that Avedick was not cast into prison until three years after his persecutors were rid of the "Man in the Iron Mask." That list by no means exhausts the attempts to clear up this two-centuries-old mystery. Many of them have been preposterous to the last degree. All of them are steeped in romance. The authors of the majority of the stories, more or less fanciful, agree in describing the attitude of the prisoner as dignified. In none of them does the hero fret or fume. Whoever he was he appears to have possessed most of the elements of which martyrs

SAT WITH HIS BACK TOWARDS THE WINDOW.

are constituted. There is comparatively little divergence between the personal descriptions of the man. For consistency's sake the theorists refrain from describing his countenance. But his figure is always set down as tall and commanding. His carriage is always grace itself, his demeanour always studiously polite. His patience was monumental. Even St. Mars, who stood between his prisoner and the outer world from the moment he was handed over to his care until he went hence to the Land of Silence, has no complaint to register against the correctness of his captive's conduct throughout his long and wearying incarceration. What a task this same St. Mars undertook! And how faithfully he performed it! His vigilance never for a moment relaxed. His patience never failed him. He was the most perfect gaoler the world has ever known. More of St. Mars anon.

There remain two theories which deserve more serious examination. Both claim to dispose of the mystery once and for ever. Of these we will first propound that of M. Jung, without subscribing to its accuracy or allowing the claim of its author that it solves the problem. M. Jung is the latest theorist in the field; but he cannot justly claim to have superseded his immediate predecessor in this province of research, M. Funck-Brentano, in the matter of purely logical solution. As a matter of fact, the French staff-officer travels over most of the same ground trodden by the learned librarian of the Arsenal in Paris, where most of the volumes recovered from the Bastille after the fortress-prison had fallen were deposited. M. Jung appears to have availed himself of the same resources as those completely mastered by M. Funck-Brentano; but with identical information at their disposal, they arrive at different destinations. The latter is convinced that he has run the "Man in the Iron Mask" to earth in the person of the treacherous Count Mattioli, and the former stakes his reputation on his discovery of a nameless poison-conspirator. Victorien Sardou declares that since M. Funck-Brentano's book appeared there has been no mystery left to solve in this matter. To our thinking, the dramatist's judgment is the correct one. M. Jung's story is full of interest; but it is unconvincing when considered side by side with the conclusive deductions of his rival, who marshals his facts with mathematical precision, and draws his inferences with inevitable logic. M. Jung does not show us why so much trouble should have been taken to mask and detain this "Gentleman from Lorraine" for twenty years. He completely fails in his efforts at identification, and, to our mind, leaves the question very much where he found it. We lean to the side espoused by Victorien Sardou, without in any measure desiring to dictate to those of our readers who still regard the mystery as unsolved.

Emulating the example of all successful detectives, M. Funck-Brentano seizes upon the first available piece of indisputable evidence. This happens to be the diary of one Etienne de Junca, the king's lieutenant at the Bastille in 1698. This is what the business-like old soldier, always belauded for his accuracy, his conscientiousness, and his fidelity, writes:

"Thursday, September 18, 1698.

"At three o'clock in the afternoon M. Saint Mars, Governor of the Bastille, made his first appearance, coming from the governorship of the Iles Ste. Marguerite-Honorat, bringing with him in his conveyance the prisoner he had formerly at Pignerol, whom he caused always to be masked, and whose name is not mentioned. Directly he got out of the carriage he put him in the Bazinières Tower, and waited until night for me to take him and put him (at nine o'clock) with M. de Rosarges, one of the sergeants brought by the governor, in the third room of the Bertandière Tower, which I had had furnished with all necessaries some days before his arrival, having received orders to that effect from M. St. Mars. The prisoner will be looked after and waited upon by M. Rosarges, and maintained by the governor."

Here is irrefutable evidence as to the arrival of M. St. Mars's masked prisoner. Now for an extract from De Junca's record of the liberations and deaths of Bastille prisoners:

"November 19, 1703.

"On this same day, November 19, 1703, the prisoner always masked with a mask of black velvet, whom M. St. Mars brought with him on coming from the Iles Ste. Marguerite-Honorat, whom he had kept for a long time, the which happening to be a little ill yesterday on coming from mass he died to-day at ten o'clock at night, without having had a serious illness. It (the illness) could not have been slighter. M. Girant, who confessed him yesterday, is surprised at his death. He did not receive the sacrament, and our chaplain exhorted him a moment before he died, and this unknown prisoner kept here for so long was buried on Tuesday at four o'clock, November 20, in the graveyard of St. Paul, our parish; on the register of burial he was given also the name unknown. M. de Rosarges and Arfeil, surgeon, signed the register."

In the margin of this quaintly grim death notice appears the following important addendum, in the same handwriting:

"I have since learned that they called him M. de Marchiel on the register, and that forty livres was the cost of the funeral."

These documents, reproduced in all their ruggedness, establish the fact that M. St. Mars had charge of a prisoner who was always masked whilst he was governor of the Ste. Marguerite prison, and that he conveyed that same prisoner with him on his removal to the Bastille as governor. But who was this mysterious prisoner, and why was he detained?

The register of St. Paul's Church advances the inquiry a little farther. It runs:

"On the 19th Nov., 1703, Machioly, aged 45 years, or thereabout, died in Bastille, whose body was buried in the churchyard of St. Paul, his parish, on the 20th of the present month, in the presence of M. de Rosarges, Major of the Bastille, and Arielle, Surgeon-major of the Bastille."

Thus we know that one De Marchiel, or Machioly, a masked prisoner of St. Mars, was buried on November 20, 1703, beyond doubt. Then, as to his identity, this letter, written by St. Mars to the Minister Barbezieux, pours a flood of light upon the mystery:

"My Lord,—You command me to tell you what is the practice when I am absent or ill as to visits made and the precautions taken daily in regard to the prisoners committed to my charge. My two lieutenants serve the meals at the regular hours, just as they have seen me do, and just as I still do, when I am well. The first of the two lieutenants takes the keys of the prison of my ancient prisoner, with whom we commence, opens the three doors, and enters the chamber of the prisoner, and politely hands him the plates and dishes, one on top of the other, and then the second lieutenant examines the plates and sees that there is nothing wrong in them. He examines everything as it enters and leaves the prison. After they have given him the utensil, they examine his bed inside and out, and then the gratings of his room-window, and very often even the man himself. After having asked him very politely if he wants anything else, they lock the doors, and proceed to similar business with other prisoners."

"My ancient prisoner" was clearly a person of great consequence to the State, and his isolation from his fellowmen a consideration of foremost importance. M. Funck-Brentano justifies both assertions.

A bargain was struck.

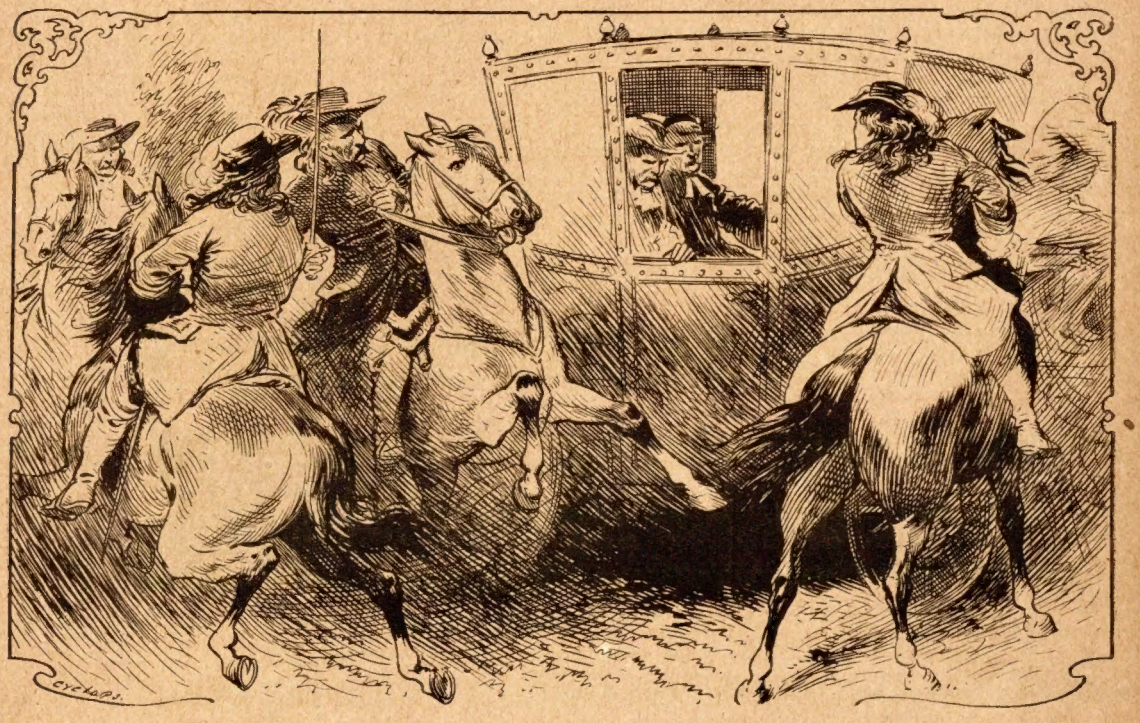
Another letter, from the pen of M. Formanoir, a grand-nephew of St. Mars, written in 1698, helps us in the same direction. It proceeds:

"In 1698, M. St. Mars exchanged the governorship of the Islands for that of the Bastille. When he set off for his new office with his prisoner, he stayed for a short time at his château at Palteau on his estate, where he had appointed to meet his tenantry. The Mask arrived in a litter, which preceded that of M. St. Mars. They were accompanied by several men on horseback. The peasants went out to meet their seigneur. M. St. Mars took his meals with the prisoner, who sat with his back towards the windows of the room, which looked out upon the courtyard. The peasants of whom I had inquiry could not see if he had his mask on when eating; but they observed that M. St. Mars, who sat opposite to him, had a pair of pistols by his plate. They were attended by a single valet only, Antoine Ru, who took away the dishes served to him in an ante-chamber, having first carefully closed the door of the dining-room. When the prisoner crossed the courtyard, a black mask was always on his face."

Who, in the presence of this documentary evidence can doubt that the charge of Governor St. Mars was a precious one, indeed, and that the revelation of his identity was regarded as a matter of life and death?

M. Funck-Brentano produces at this point a batch of letters which, unless we pre-suppose an aimless and preposterous conspiracy, when read in conjunction with the correspondence we have already cited, go all the way to settle the question of identity, and to furnish the reason for the precautions observed in detaining the "Man in the Iron Mask."

The first of this series of letters, the authenticity of which has never been traversed, is one written by Baron Heiss, formerly a captain in an Alsace regiment, whose father was "concerned in the kidnapping of Count Ercolo Mattioli, Secretary of State to Charles IV., Duke of Mantua." The remainder of this important dossier supplies abundant reason for these masterful measures resorted to by the ministers of Louis XIV. They were prompted



THE CARRIAGE WAS SURROUNDED BY A TROOP OF HORSEMEN.

to the arrest by profound indignation, and bound to secrecy by considerations of international importance.

The French King already possessed Pignerol, which he had acquired in 1682. It was only necessary that he should annex Casal, in the Dukedom of Mantua, to enable him to dominate the whole of Upper Italy, and hold the Court of Turin completely and directly at his mercy. Louvois spared no pains to spur his royal master on to acquire this coveted Casal by fair means or by foul.

The three of Mantua, one of whose appurtenances, as we have indicated, was this same strategic Casal, was occupied by young Duke Charles IV. of Ganzago, a frivolous, happy-go-lucky, dare-devil of a ruler, who spent all the money he could lay his hands on on Venetian fêtes and their accompanying and costly trivialities. In the year 1677, he had pawned the whole of the Crown revenues with the Jews. Negotiation with this personage should not have been difficult.

To Count Ercolo Mattioli the young duke confided his most sacred secrets as Secretary of State. The count passed through a brilliant University curriculum at Bologna, and, at the age of twenty-three, rose to the highest position in the State under Charles III., the father of a spendthrift son. To the counsel and care of Mattioli the anxious parent confidently committed his feather-headed successor—with what result we shall see.

King Louis's representative at the Mantuan Court was the Abbé D'Estrades, a loyal and eminently shrewd master of statecraft. To him was entrusted the task of realising the French hopes with respect to Casal. He set himself to work to corrupt Count Ercolo Mattioli, and truth compels us to admit that he found the task less difficult of accomplishment than even he dreamed. The Mantuan Prime Minister was vain, ambitious, avaricious. The abbé was not slow to perceive and take full advantage of these fatal weaknesses. Ere many moons had waxed and waned a bargain was struck for the transfer of Casal from the possession of the rackety young duke to the rule and governance of Louis. The price agreed upon was 100,000 crowns. Count Mattioli's commission was fixed at two hundred double golden louis. The larger sum was handed over under circumstances of the utmost secrecy. Mattioli's commission was promptly paid, and the King showed his personal appreciation of his services by presenting him, in addition to the money, with a diamond pin worth twice the amount of the douceur.

Two months later the Courts of Madrid, Turin, Vienna, and the Venetian Republic were ringing with the news of the "deal." Complications of a most crucial kind followed immediately upon the discovery.

Who had given the game away?

By the process of exhaustion the conspirators encountered no difficulty in finding the traitor in Count Ercolo Mattioli.

The discovery made, a terrible revenge was determined upon.

To the Abbé D'Estrades the mission of vengeance was confided. Carefully concealing his suspicion, nay, his certain knowledge of the source of the treachery in the

affaire Casal, D'Estrades redoubled his polite attentions to the count. The abbé invited the Mantuan traitor to an audience with Louis, an invitation which both flattered his vanity and threw him completely off his guard. He entered the abbé's carriage and was driven across the frontier, chatting gaily with his companion. That was the count's last taste of gaiety.

As soon as the frontier was passed the carriage was surrounded by a troop of horsemen. Mattioli was bidden to alight. He obeyed without a murmur, though he knew full well that the fate of a traitor awaited him. How terrible that fate was to be, however, even his accusing conscience could not have fully realised then.

Reporting the occurrence to his royal master, Catinat wrote: "It came off without any violence, and no one knows the name of the knave, not even the officers who helped to arrest him."

It was then that the French king issued that historic command, obedience to which surrounded the "Man in the Iron Mask" with the mystery we believe M. Funck-Brentano has after the lapse of two centuries penetrated and dispelled.

"You must see to it," said Louis XIV., addressing the faithful D'Estrades, "that no one ever knows what becomes of this man."

The seizure of the perjured Mattioli is confirmed by a work published in Mantua in 1682, entitled "La Prudenza Triomfante di Casale." It contains this passage:

> "The Secretary (Mattioli) was surrounded by ten or twelve horsemen, who seized him, masked him, disguised him, and conducted him to Pignerol."

This opuscule appeared three years later than the kidnapping of the count, who was handed over to the custody of St. Mars at Pignerol on May 2, 1679, and who never left that custody until the earth closed over him in the Bastille burial ground on the 20th day of November, 1703.

From Pignerol, St. Mars's lifelong prisoner was removed to the Isles Ste. Marguerite-Honorat in 1694, and thence to the Bastille in 1698, where, as we have seen, he breathed his last at the close of a life of remorse which he endured with remarkable fortitude and phenomenal patience.

Readers who are accustomed to look below the surface for solutions of problems of high politics will perceive that the "Man in the Iron Mask"—whose visor was, as a matter of fact, of black velvet—was, in the first instance, not of such vital importance as the act which deprived him of his liberty. The arrest and imprisonment of Mattioli were gross breaches of international law. There was little fear of resentment of the insult by the Mantuan ruler, who, there is every reason to believe, was privy to the fate which had overtaken the minister who had so shamelessly betrayed him. The most superficial student of the history of the times, when lettres de cachet which consigned "undesirables" to oblivion and death were issued every hour of every day, can feel no surprise at the consignment of Count Ercolo Mattioli to a living death as a punishment for his treachery. Louis and his ministers were bent on making a striking example of the Mantuan chief secretary, and the duke was not averse from the decision. But the anger of these personages might have spent itself in the course of a few years, and Mattioli might have been set free; but there always remained the possibility—indeed, when the whole of the circumstances are considered, the more than probability—of the count's using his freedom to stir up the old international imbroglio. It is, perhaps, noteworthy that the Chancelleries of Madrid, Turin, Vienna, and the Venetian Republic did not inquire more closely as to the fate of their perjured informant. But the matter was a delicate one, and the times were ticklish. They had availed themselves of his treachery. They had got from him all they desired, all he had to give, and they saw no useful purpose to be served by interesting themselves too ostentatiously in his fate. There is never much affection lost between the spy and his employer. So the Chancelleries let sleeping dogs lie, and Mattioli was left to languish to the bitter end in a Bastille dungeon.

Had he regained his liberty or had he been able to communicate to his friends the secret which perished with him and his captors, such an agitation might have been engineered as would have embroiled the nations affected by the annexation of the strategical position, Casal, under the circumstances and with the object we wot of. That was the main reason for the tireless vigilance exercised over his every movement, and for the stringent means adopted to conceal his identity behind a mask. The legend that that mask was of iron is, as we have seen, a legend, and nothing more. All the evidence worth a moment's consideration proves the assertion of the later investigators of the "mystery" that the face of Mattioli, the traitor, was hidden behind a visor of black velvet.

With the assistance of M. Funck-Brentano, we have

"You must see to it."

striven to unmask this misguided man, who expiated his crime with a certain amount of dignified resignation. We learn that as the years sped on and the distance between the event of the betrayal and the passing hour lengthened, the restrictions put upon Mattioli were slightly relaxed. But, all the legends to the contrary notwithstanding, no living soul save St. Mars, Louvois, Catinat, and D'Estrades looked in life upon his unmasked countenance after he crossed the threshold of the Pignerol prison in 1694. All descriptions of his face after he passed through those portals are inventions of the fabulists and the novelists—nothing more.

But, when all has been said and done and written, the pronouncement of Sardou remains unrefuted. "To the public mystery is ever more attractive than the truth." Then he clenches his argument thus. Says this fine student of the human imagination: "There is a want of prestige about Mattioli; while about the twin-brother of Louis XIV.—ah, now, there is something which appeals to the imagination!" "Then," he goes on, "there are the guides and showmen to reckon with, those faithful guardians of legends whose propaganda is more aggressive than that of the

scholars. When you reflect that every day at the Ile Ste. Marguerite the Masked Man's cell is shown by a woman, who retails all the traditional details about the luxuriant life of the prisoner, his lace, his plate, and the attentions shown him by M. St. Mars, you will agree that the struggle with this daily discourse must be hopeless, and you may not come off with a whole skin! Legends," he concludes, "are the history of the people, and especially those which filter through their instincts, their prejudices, and their passions. You will never convince them of their falsehood."

The author of these words has, nevertheless, declared that M. Funck-Brentano has shown us the face of the "Man in the Iron Mask," and we are content to err, if err we do, in such good company, and subscribe to the pronouncement that the historic visor (of black velvet) veiled the countenance of Count Ercolo Mattioli, the traitor, from a curious and inquisitive world.

Byways of Crime

Cheque Forging.

IT has been a recognised maxim with criminologists for many years that the advance of civilisation causes the increase of crime. Wherever ingenuity is expended to add to the convenience of mankind, so ingenuity is also expended to turn the improvement to nefarious ends. In the days when there was no money, and when all business transactions were conducted by barter, simple swindling was the only known form of dishonesty. With the introduction of metallic money came the counterfeit coiner. The advent of the bank note as a convenient method of dealing with large sums, the actual weight of which would be troublesome, brought with it the "note faker," while the invention of cheques immediately caused an army of cheque forgers to spring as from the ground.

The amount of skill expended in forging cheques is astonishing. The cheque forgers are the cleverest class of criminal living, for inasmuch as the possibilities of cheque frauds are almost unlimited, it pays the criminal to take time and see that his work is perfect. A bank note for five pounds, real or forged, fetches only five pounds, whereas a blank cheque with the name of Rothschild or Rockefeller cleverly forged upon it is worth exactly the amount the swindler may choose to put on the face thereof. Endless are the plans which have been invented to circumvent the clever rogues, and they have all met with failure.

The cheque forger's first operation is to get hold of a cheque from the book of a client of a bank. In more than one instance this has been the sole object of a burglary. The next thing—if it is to be a simple, straightforward forgery—is to obtain a copy of the client's signature, after which all is plain sailing. But this crude method is not at all to the taste of the genuine expert. He does not get enough out of it, and the risk is just as great as in more elaborate frauds. He therefore varies his procedure. Wherever possible he gets possession of a cheque already filled in for a small amount by the man he intends to victimise. His expert knowledge of chemistry has told him exactly what acids will erase inks, and he carefully paints out the sum written on the cheque and replaces the figures and letters by others authorising payment of a much larger amount. This being done to his satisfaction, he passes the cheque on to a third party, who cashes it and gives him the spoil.

A crossed cheque does not trouble him in the least, for he will either remove the crossing so neatly that only a microscopic examination will reveal the fact that the cheque has been tampered with, or he will pay the paper in through his confederate's bank, feeling certain that a cheque which has been through the clearing house will not be so carefully scrutinised as one which is presented over the counter.

To frustrate the forger, an ingenious individual invented the machine which perforates on the cheque the exact amount for which it is made payable, but the expert cheque forger was equal to this move. He provided himself with his own perforator, and also with a large number of samples of the cheques and drafts manufactured and printed by different firms of cheque-book makers, and waited.

Presently he obtained possession of a perforated cheque, drawn on the account of a man whose balance he felt sure was a large one. With a specially ground razor he cut out the pieces of the cheque which had been perforated, and, having made a pulp similar in composition to the paper of which the cheque was composed, substituted it for the excised piece. This sounds very simple, but it takes a long apprenticeship to learn how the substitution is made. By means of photography the forger has obtained plates which will produce the pattern printed on any of the cheques of well-known houses, and with these plates he fills in the proper pattern on the back of the cheque. His acids then come into play again, and he removes the original figures and replaces them by others indicating a much larger sum. This sum he next perforates on the cheque, and it is ready for presentation.

Supposing that the perforation has damaged a portion of the signature, the professional manipulator will easily remedy that. He is far too clever to trace the sign manual of the client whom he is victimising, for he knows perfectly well that a man's signature is never exactly the same twice. Accordingly he will either erase the whole of the name, and then re-write it, or he will carefully fill in any portions that have been deleted in the process of repair. This done, he passes the cheque in the usual way, or gets it cashed by one of his confederates.

The stock-in-trade of the cheque forger is far from elaborate. He keeps one or two sharp knives, a muller, such as artists use, a couple of fine steel rollers which he uses for restoring the glaze on cheques that have been "improved," and his private receipt for making pulp. The last item is the one that the officials at Scotland Yard would like to get hold of, but none of the fraternity have ever betrayed the secret. A small spirit stove and an assortment of pens completes the outfit. Few forgers now make their own engraved plates; they find it cheaper and more expeditious to get them from some of their shady friends who make a living by copying works of art of that kind.

The inventive faculties of everybody who has to sign many cheques have been taxed to devise methods by which the tender attentions of the forger may be avoided. One man, whose signature consisted of exactly six letters, apportioned a letter to each day, and made a small mark, almost invisible to the naked eye, under the one which represented the day on which the cheque was signed. A gang of forgers tracked him for nearly a year before they discovered the secret, and then charged him their expenses on the first of his cheques that they forged! Another gentleman conceived the idea of signing his name differently every alternate day, following a fixed system of which he had apprised his bankers. His plan worked admirably for some time, till a day came when a big cheque was cashed, bearing all the proper distinguishing marks. The cheque was a forgery, and he learnt too late that the cunning criminal had unravelled the secret of his code.

The ambition of every cheque forger is to have a confederate in a large bank, and endless are the wiles which some of them will employ to get some poor, weak-minded clerk into their trammels. Witness the Goudie case. The youth was merely the tool of a set of very clever sharpers, who victimised him, and then left him in the lurch. Fortunately, through the sharpness of the police, some of them were caught and punished.

The Thief Got Away.

A BURGLARY had taken place at a mansion near Oldham, and on a search being instituted the whole of the missing property was discovered concealed in a ditch at a lonely part of the high road.

It was supposed that the thief would come to the spot under cover of the darkness and remove his booty. A constable, newly appointed to the force, was told off to keep watch, and arrest the burglar if he should come for the stolen goods.

About eleven at night that worthy appeared on the scene, and began to collect the plunder, but the policeman stopped him by shouting:

"Hi, man, leave that alone, will you? I'm watching that so as to catch the man who stole them!"

Life of Charles Peace.

CHAPTER LI.—(*Continued.*)

IN common with most philanthropists, the Preston Gaol chaplain considered that almost all crime was traceable to three closely-linked causes: drunkenness, ignorance, and the habit of living in filthy, over-crowded dwellings.

But he maintained that these, in their turn, were due in great measure to the want of sympathy and intercourse between the upper and lower classes. This cause the late Justice Telford animadverted on while on the bench within a very short period of his death. Of course, the effect produced by the solitary cell depends on many other things, such as temperament, previous habits, etc.

The sluggish, lymphatic man, with small lungs and small brain, adapts himself easily to his solitude. Good food, light work, and a sufficient allowance of visits to break and cheer the monotony of his cell, reconcile him to his position; he becomes almost as passive as a vegetable.

Uniformly submissive, he gives no trouble, and makes an excellent prisoner. On the other hand, the large-lunged, large-brained man of sanguine temperament is affected very differently. To him the cell is a severe punishment; he chafes and frets under restraint, and most likely grows irritable and sullen.

An ignorant, stupid gaoler would try by sharp punishment to coerce a man of this kind to submission, but to goad and madden him still more would be the only result of such an attempt.

Not improbably a duel between prisoner and gaoler would be provoked, and perhaps some tragedy, like that enacted at Birmingham Gaol, be the issue. The details of this tragedy are treated in a masterly manner by Mr. Charles Reade in his "Never Too Late to Mend."

Those who are in the habit of having prisoners under their charge hear some extraordinary stories of crimes.

While Peace was undergoing the probationary term of the sentence passed upon him, more than one member of a light-fingered family of some celebrity were inmates of the same prison.

Peace had not been many weeks in gaol before a prisoner was lodged therein charged with a capital offence.

CHAPTER LII.

Since the castigation Peace received from the hands of Mr. Philip Jamblin and the flight of the boy, Alf Purvis, we have had occasion to take but one cursory glance at the inmates of Stoke Ferry Farm, this being on the occasion of Richard Ashbrook's visit to the hospitable English homestead.

The observation made by Mr. Jamblin, sen., to his son, Philip, respecting his falling into the same pitfall as young Ashbrook, had special significance.

After the departure of Peace from the neighbourhood, young Jamblin had paid frequent visits to the grounds and house owned by Nelly's aunt.

It was pretty plainly demonstrated to most persons who took the trouble to interest themselves in such matters that the farmer's son had a sneaking fondness for Nell Fulford.

For many months after Peace's departure a course of love-making was carried on between young Jamblin and Nell. They did not appear to be able to break the spell which bound them—a spell, indeed, which ended in the death of one and long years of sorrow for the other.

But Nell was infatuated with the handsome young farmer, who had been her valiant champion when persecuted so persistently by our hero. The man Giles, who had been worsted in a conflict with Peace, was also a devoted admirer of Nell's.

He was a moody, morose, vindictive fellow, whom nobody liked, and had left the neighbourhood long before Peace.

Whither he had gone no one appeared to know, and, indeed, to say the truth, nobody seemed to care.

Thus matters stood when, at the close of one market day, Mr. Philip Jamblin arrived at the old Carved Lion.

He dismounted from his horse and went into the public room of Brickett's hostelry. He had some business to transact with the maltster whom he had appointed to meet there.

When this was over the two had divers and sundry glasses together, and soon after nightfall Jamblin's steed was brought round to the front door of the inn.

The young farmer remounted, and trotted leisurely along Dennett's Lane in the direction of his own home.

Upon arriving at that part of the lane where Peace's workshop stood, he, much to his surprise and pleasure, beheld Nell at some little distance off, awaiting his coming.

"Why, sweetheart, who would have thought of seeing you, at this hour, too, when all good lasses should be at home?" said the farmer.

"Ah, Master Philip," she answered, "I was sartin sure you'd be coming this way, and that's why I be here."

"Ah! I see. Well, I'm glad to see thee, Nell, but ye bee'st a looking a little pale I'm thinking."

"Am I?"

"Yes, I fancy so; however, it may be but fancy after all."

"Maybe it is."

"And maybe it ain't."

"You've come from the market?" she said quickly.

"I was there for a goodish while in the early part of the day but I've just come now from the Carved Lion."

"Ah! I see; that's why you didn't call at aunt's."

"I had a little business to do—had to meet a customer at Brickett's. Now don't be jealous; it wasn't a leddy or a lass."

"And bee'st thee going home then?"

"Ay, surely, I hope to get home some time to-night. Why, what ails thee, Nell dear?"

On either side of the lane in which they were conversing ran a high, thick-set hedge. Nell glanced at the opposite side to that on which she stood, and placed her finger on her lips.

She then laid hold of the bridle, and drew the horse some little distance forward. Then she glanced again at the hedge.

"What's up?" cried her companion.

"Hush!" she whispered. "Somebody has been watching us from behind the hedge, and has heard every word we have said."

"My darling girl, you are full of strange fancies to-night," said her lover.

"It be as I ha' told ye," she answered. "I seed a pair of dark, flashing eyes a-gleamin' through the branches."

"And what matters if anybody has been a-listenin'? Much good will it do 'em."

She drew his horse still farther on, and again glanced around.

"It be of no use yer shakin' her head," said Nell. "I seed him as plainly as I see you now."

"Well, what if you did, lass? Who was it? That pedlar fellow, Peace?"

"No, not him."

"Who, then?"

"Giles Chudley. That's who it was. He did not think I saw him, but I did; and he means mischief."

"Who cares for an idle, good-for-nothing like that?"

"Come back, Master Philip; come back, as you love your poor Nell. For her sake come back."

"Come back to where?"

"To the Lion. Don't go home to-night. I am a poor, weak fool—weak as water. I've no head or heart of my own when your eyes be a-shinin' on my face, and when your words be a-whisperin' in my ears. Oh, Master Philip, ye

know well enough how silly, how miserably foolish I've been."

The young farmer was touched; he reproached himself at that moment, and would have gladly recalled the past, if that had been possible.

"I can ill bear reproaches, Nell, although I well deserve them; but no man is wise at all times, and the most prudent women are not always as careful as they might be, and, to say the truth, they mostly pay the penalty, which is hard."

He leant forward over the side of his horse, and placed his hands on her forehead. Then he said, in a voice of touching sweetness:

"Thee bee'st trembling, Nelly."

"I feel timmersome loike, and something whispers in my ear that you ought not to go home to-night. If ye do, it will go hard wi' both on us."

He tried to laugh away her fears, but she would not be so deceived.

A horrible foreboding had seized her, and she endeavoured to turn his horse's head in an opposite direction to the one he had been taking.

"Well, you are in a strange mood to-night; something's upset you."

She shook her head.

Young Jamblin's face grew cloudy and dark. He did not very well know what to make of her.

Presently he said:

"I've done ye wrong, lass—I'm free to confess that, but ye shan't suffer for it. We'll settle matters all right enough, and if there be no other course left, no one can say anythin' agen ye when thee bee'st my wife."

The girl uttered a cry which seemed to come from the depths of her heart.

"Be of good cheer, darling," cried her companion, "and don't ye give way to doubts and fears. I'll show ye that I'm not the man to forget one so truthful and trusting as ye have been."

"I do not mind about myself; it be for you that I'm fearful and timmersome."

"And for what reason are you so fearful?"

She put her lips to his ear, as if the words she whispered were too terrible to be spoken aloud in that lonely place.

He laughed, as with one hand he smoothed the soft brown hair over her forehead.

"Don't you have any fear about me. I'm well able to take very excellent care of myself. No—no, Nelly, it won't do; you're not going to frighten Phil Jamblin by any such groundless fears."

"Oh, don't turn away," she cried; "do come back to the Lion."

"But, my dear girl, what will the guv'nor and my sister say at my stopping out all night without letting them know?"

"I'll let them know—I'll send a message by Stephen," she exclaimed gently.

"And they'll put me down as a milksop—as a craven. Ah, no, lass, that would never do!"

"Suppose you were ill?"

"But I am not ill—was never better in my life."

"Ah, Philip, you must let me have my way for this once—only for this once—you know," she murmured, in a soft and beseeching manner.

But it was of no use—the farmer was obstinate, he could not or would not see the force of her argument, or yield to her powers of persuasion.

He told her again that she was a prey to groundless fears.

She looked at him sadly.

"Ye be more obstinate and harder than I took ye for," she cried.

He smiled, and placed his hand on her shoulder caressingly.

He found that she was still trembling, even more than before.

"Philip," cried the girl, creeping closer to him, "I tell ye again this be no fancy; and even if it be, there would be no harm in your giving way to me for this once. I've tried to forget what happened between us two not long ago, when your head was lost to pleasure, and when my heart was lost to you; but I tell ye that something will soon see the light which will prevent my forgetting that foolish hour."

A shudder seemed to pass over the frame of the young farmer, who was evidently deeply moved at this declaration.

"Oh, Nell," he murmured, "it is I who have been to blame."

"I do not reproach you," she answered. "I meant to have kept it all from you, that I might suffer for it; but I tell ye of it now that I may ask ye by that which is your'n, and your'n alone, not to go farther to-night, but to turn back and put up at Brickett's house. I implore ye to do this kindness by that which will soon mek' me love or hate ye more. Oh, Philip Jamblin, for the love of mercy hearken unto me. I ask ye by the memory of the happy hours we have spent together, by the remembrance of the past and hope for the future, not to return to Stoke Ferry Farm this night. I've watched and waited for ye that I might give thee timely warning."

"But, my dear Nell, you seem to be full of fancies to-night. No harm will come to me. I will see ye to-morrow, lass. I shall have good news for you then."

The girl shook her head and looked mournfully at her companion, who did not fail to note that her eyes were filled with tears.

His limbs trembled with emotion—he was greatly troubled; but, even at this time, he was under the full impression that her forebodings were conjured up by the agency of an over-heated imagination. He drew her towards him, and covered her face with burning and passionate kisses. Then he bade her a hasty good night, and urged on his horse. Half stupefied and numbed, the girl stood as immovable and passionless as a statue.

In a few moments she aroused herself from her lethargy, and, placing her hands against her temples, uttered a deep-drawn sigh; then she started off at full speed in pursuit of Jamblin.

She head the clattering of his horse's hoofs, but he was far away and out of sight. She ran after him like one possessed, and never paused till fairly exhausted. Then she sat on a stile by the side of the road, and, burying her face in her hands, sobbed convulsively.

"All is of no avail," she ejaculated; "a wilful man will have his own way."

The sky gathered over with clouds, which rose towards the moon.

A cold wind swept over the surface of the earth and muttered among the branches of the trees. The clouds grew darker and heavier; the moon was darkened by a small black cloud. Nell still sat silent and dejected on the stile. She gave a low and plaintive wail.

Meanwhile, Philip Jamblin, heedless of the warning he had received from his sweetheart, was making the best of his way towards Stoke Ferry Farm.

He passed safely through Dennett's Lane, and reached a bridle road, which was nearly at right angles with it.

This road—or rather, the greater part of it—was sheltered on either side by tall trees, hedges, and underwood. At noontide in summer it was a charming retreat, but at night it was lonely and cheerless.

The farmer had not gone a very great distance after turning out of the lane before he had sufficient reason for disquietude, or, indeed, alarm. His horse became restive and pricked up his ears. Jamblin, however, held him well in hand, and proceeded along with greater caution.

In a few minutes after this the animal stumbled, but quickly recovered itself.

A terrible blow was delivered from behind by some unseen person full on the head of young Jamblin.

"You scoundrel!" exclaimed the young farmer, who, although partially stunned, had not lost his presence of mind. Grasping the thin end of his riding-whip, he whirled round the handle, which was loaded with lead, in the hope of striking his mysterious and unseen assailant.

The horse he was bestriding now fell, and Mr. Jamblin, who was a powerful, active young man, sprang to his feet to confront the enemy.

He beheld a big, hulking fellow, who was armed with a hedge-stick, standing in front of him.

Jamblin struck out with his whip, the blow from which was received on the upraised left arm of his assailant, who again aimed a blow at the head of the other. This Mr. Jamblin turned on one side with his whip.

Perceiving now that it was a question of life or death, he advanced a step or two, raising the handle of his riding-whip, with which he struck another tremendous blow. The man, however, drew back his head, and instead of alighting on his head the blow was received on the upper jaw; his lip was laid open, and two of his teeth were knocked out.

The man was driven to desperation, and the struggle after this was but of short duration. The cowardly ruffian stepped back a pace or two, and delivered a crashing stroke on the head of the ill-fated young farmer, who fell to the earth helpless and powerless.

Then the murderer rained a series of merciless blows on the prostrate man, thereby reducing him to a state of insensibility.

All this had been but the work of two or three minutes at

the most. But the diabolical wretch had not as yet completed his murderous work. Drawing a clasp-knife from his pocket, he inflicted with its blade a severe gash in the throat of his victim.

Ruffian as he was, he was also a coward. As he was stooping over the dead body of the farmer he became alarmed. He thought he heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and the knife, which by this time was covered with blood, slipped out of his hand.

He searched for it in vain. The ground was strewed with fallen leaves, and the knife was nowhere to be seen.

Big drops of perspiration fell from the murderer's temples on his horny hands as he was groping about for the missing weapon.

A horrible thought took possession of him. It was this. Possibly the instrument with which the deed was done would rise up in judgment against him, and be the means of his identification. He shook and trembled with fear; a death-like spasm crept through his heart.

But during his flight he had attracted the attention of another observer. Henry Adolphus, the earl's footman, had been sent by his master with a message to a landowner and a baronet. The radiant footman, upon returning from the errand on which he had been sent, thought it a little singular that a man should be running at headlong speed over mead and meadow.

He paused and watched the fugitive, and, as he did so, muttered to himself:

"That chap ain't after no good, I'll be sworn. I expect he's been doing a little prigging on his own account. Howsomever, it ain't no bis'ness o' mine, and as to catching him, it ain't to be thought of. What's every man's bis'ness is no man's bis'ness."

And so, consoling himself with this trite axiom, Mr. Henry Adolphus pursued his dignified course homewards.

He had no occasion to go down the road where the body of the dead man lay and hence it was that our radiant footman escaped having his feelings shocked, which, to say the truth, would have been a terrible thing to a man of his delicate organisation.

"AN UGLY, EVIL-LOOKING FELLOW," SAID HENRY ADOLPHUS.

He became almost frantic, and turned over the leaves in the hope of finding the knife, but his endeavours were not crowned with success. As he was thus engaged his eyes fell upon the pale, ghastly face of his victim, which was turned upwards towards the sky.

Fearful lest he should be discovered by some chance traveller, he arose to his feet and ran off as fast as his legs would carry him.

He soon reached a place known as Larch Green. At one part of this was a stagnant pool of water. He knelt down beside this and washed his ensanguined hands.

While thus occupied, he saw the figure of a man approaching. He was some distance off, but he could see that the stranger's attention was directed towards him.

The murderer flew in the opposite direction over several meadows, never pausing till he felt assured that he was far removed from the scene of death. Then, panting and groaning, he crept into a dense thicket of trees.

After waiting here a considerable time, with his heart knocking against his ribs, he emerged from his hiding-place and fled precipitately, he knew not nor cared whither.

He reached Broxbridge utterly unaware of the fact that a near neighbour and a tenant of his master's had been foully murdered, and that the dead body of the murdered man was lying in a road the end of which he—Henry Adolphus—had passed as he trudged home.

Upon reaching Broxbridge he did not go at once to the Hall.

He just dropped in at the Carved Lion to have a "cooler" and a little friendly chat with the landlord. The aforesaid "cooler" not having the desired effect, Henry Adolphus supplemented it by another, insisting at the same time upon Brickett joining him.

"That's a deal better," said the footman after he had swallowed the contents of his second glass. "I've put on the steam coming home, and felt as hot and dry as a salamander."

"I've had a goodish turn myself," returned Brickett, "and have only just come in. Any fresh news?"

"None as I know on," observed the flunkey, "only that

I saw a queer-looking chap a-running like mad over Squire Curtis's meadows.'

"You did, eh? What sort of customer was he?"

"Oh, an ugly, evil-looking fellow as anyone would wish to be shut of."

"A tall chap, with a black beard and bushy eyebrows?"

"Yes, something after that fashion, as far as I could see; but I was a long way off. He seemed to me to have a cut or bruise on his ugly mug."

"The very same!" exclaimed Brickett.

"Do you know him?"

"No; but I saw a chap answering that description washing his face and hands in the pool at Larch Green. When he caught sight of me he made off. He's been up to something, I'll dare be sworn—burglary, or summat of that sort."

"I shouldn't wonder if it be the same as I saw."

"Should you know 'im agen?"

"I might; but I ain't quite certain about that."

Brickett remained for some time silent and thoughtful after this.

"I hope as how he ain't been up to mischief," he said presently. "I do hope that; but I tell 'ee candidly, Master Henry, I didn't at all like the look of the varmint, and had it not been that I ain't so lively on my pins as I used to be I should have med after him, and no mistake."

"Oh, it's all right enough; I dare say the fellow's been having a set-to—a mill with someone—that's how I take it, and maybe he's got the worst of it."

"I dunno' so much 'bout that; from what I could see of him he looked a good deal like Giles—him as worked at Stoke Ferry Farm some year or two agone. If it war he, which I somehow think it war, he be's a deal altered."

"Giles, eh? Well, now you mention it, I don't know but it might be he."

"I shouldn't like to swear to 'im, but that's the idea I formed at the time; but maybe we shall larn more 'bout 'im afore long. He ain't a much good, anyhow."

"Well, Mr. Brickett, I must be for moving, so good night," said Henry Adolphus, who at once bent his steps in the direction of the Hall.

CHAPTER LIII.

There was not a merrier or more light-hearted girl than Patty Jamblin in the whole county.

But on this eventful evening Patty was sad and serious. Whether the deep shadow that was about to fall on her and the old farmer had been by some strange, mysterious influence foreshadowed, it is impossible to say.

Patty was dejected, and, indeed, it might be said, sorrowful, a circumstance very unusual with her.

As the sun sank below the earth and the curtain of darkness fell softly over Stoke Ferry House, the nightingale pouring forth his first sweet song, Patty dropped into her easy-chair and covered her face with her cold and trembling hands.

Her brother had not returned.

She watched and waited—waited anxiously. Something whispered to her what was to happen next.

Patty was sitting in the parlour. Sometimes she would start upright in her chair and listen eagerly; then she would try to reproach herself for expecting her brother Philip so soon. He was detained, doubtless had met with some friends, boon companions, who had prevailed upon him to pass a social hour or so with them.

She endeavoured to persuade herself that he was not able to return from some cause which was not explained. It would, however, be made manifest upon his return.

She felt that she must do something to break the monotony and suspense which she endured, and which every minute became more painful.

She took from the book-case a volume, with which she strove to beguile the tedium of her lonely hours. She read till her eyes ached, and then she cast aside the book.

"Why am I thus troubled?" she murmured. "Philip has been from home much later than this on many occasions. After all, there is no reason for alarm; but—but I do wish he would come home, and father is away, too, which makes me still more anxious."

The poor girl sighed to herself as she glanced at the clock, the hour-hand of which pointed to eleven.

"I wish one of them would come back," she exclaimed. "I've a good mind to send for father, but he would only call me a little fool for my pains, and yet he knows I am all by myself, and he ought to consider that. I feel wretchedly lonely."

She arose and went to the window. The sky gathered over with clouds, and a cold wind muttered among the branches of the trees and strewed the ground with brown and yellow leaves. The clouds grew darker and heavier, and rose towards the moon, which was still shining brightly.

Poor Patty went again to the bookshelf and took another volume from it at hazard.

It was a romance of the last century, written with exaggeration, but with terrible force.

At last she could bear it no longer. The very words in the book seemed to have become blood-red, and long, black spots ran up and down the page. The farmer's daughter was fairly overcome, and she let the volume fall to the ground; and in the extremity of her fear ran to the window for fresh air; she leant out and looked up to the sky listening—listening and watching for the next thing.

"Oh!" she murmured, pressing one hand against her side, "but this suspense is dreadful—too dreadful to bear! Where can Philip be, and father, too? He ought not to leave me thus!"

She remained with her eyes fixed on the black vault of heaven; her heart beat audibly.

"Heaven protect and preserve me!" she ejaculated—"preserve me and mine!"

As the clock struck twelve she heard the faint ring of a horse's hoof. It came nearer.

"It is he!—it is Philip!" she exclaimed.

She listened more intently. The sound rang harshly on her ears; she felt sick and faint.

A horse passed the window, snorting savagely. It appeared to her to be like some war-charger whose rider has been stricken down in the field of battle. She uttered a scream which rang like a clarion note in the midnight air; then she called aloud for assistance.

"Joe!—Stephen!—help!—help!" exclaimed the unhappy girl.

She heard the clattering of men's footsteps on the hard road.

They were giving chase to the flying horse, which passed on, snorting savagely, foaming at the mouth, and riderless.

"Joe!—Joe!" shrieked Patty to one of her father's labourers, "for mercy's sake, tell me what's the matter! Speak, I pray you!"

The man looked in at the window, and said in a kind tone of voice:

"We none on us know at present, but don't 'e be frightened miss. Summut's amiss, but maybe it ain't o' much consequence. Cheer up, and wait till I coom back. There ain't no call for no alarm—leastways, not as we knows on at present."

Patty sank into a chair and felt as if about to swoon. The man passed on. In a few minutes after this two of her father's servants passed the window, leading a riderless horse.

They carried lanterns in their hands, and were looking intently and examining the animal. Patty said nothing, but, pale and speechless, awaited the issue.

The horse was taken to the yard, which was at the side of the farmhouse. It was the identical yard from which the boy, Alf Purvis, had been ignominiously driven with the hare round his neck some year or two before.

The farmer's men exchanged blank looks.

"It looks precious queer, and may be as how it's an ugly bis'ness," ejaculated the carter. "Mr. Philip's bin thrown, for sartin."

"He's not a man to be throwed easily," said Joe. "I dunno think the cob's bin down."

"Yes, he has," cried Stephen. "This off-side be covered in mud and slush. There's bin an accident o' some sort."

"An accident?"

"Ay, surely summut very near it. Look at his knees."

The speaker held down the lantern in front of the horse.

"Why, heaven save us, what be this on the saddle?" exclaimed another.

"Here, man, hand us over the lantern."

By the fitful glare of the light they saw a stream of blood on the saddle and the horse's flanks.

A low moan proceeded from all present, and they stood petrified with astonishment.

"The saddle be wet!" cried one.

"Ah, surely, that it be—wet wi' blood!" exclaimed another. "There's been foul play with our young master."

While all this had been going on, the elder Mr. Jamblin, who had been playing cards at a neighbour's house, had been suddenly aroused to a sense of danger; he soon hastened homewards, and, upon catching sight of his men around the horse, he exclaimed, in a tone of indignation:

"What be all on 'ee doin' there? Ain't one man enough

to attend to a horse? Do it take five to stable a steed? Speak, some on 'ee! You've got tongues in yer heads, I s'pose?"

But none of his men seemed disposed to speak. No one appeared to have the courage to declare the real state of the case.

Puffing and panting, Mr. Jamblin hastened up to the riderless steed.

"Where be Mr. Philip?" he cried.

"He ain't coom back as yet, sur," said the stableman.

"Then where be he?" was the next question.

"We none on us know; Pepper (that was the name of the horse) has been down."

Mr. Jamblin wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"Bin down, and Mr. Philip not here," he ejaculated. Then, turning to his men, he said, in a voice of thunder:

"Look here, men; what be the yoose o' yer standing here like a set o' stockfish? Ye've got eyes and legs, I s'pose? Why don't some on ye start off and see if ye can find your young master?"

"We'll go at once," cried several simultaneously.

"I have not a morsel of doubt as to the road he would take," exclaimed the farmer. "He came from Brickett's, and would pass through Dennett's Lane, and then reach Larchgrove Road. Go, some on 'ee, at once in that direction."

Four of the men at once went in search of their young master. They carried lanterns, which, as they advanced steadily and cautiously along the road, swayed like the censers of priests above the altar.

The clouds had by this time melted away; the moon and stars shone brightly

The rustics passed on till they reached the end of Larchgrove Road. Here they turned down, and as they entered the shadows of this cheerless place a cold chill fell upon them, for they seemed to feel that it was like entering a churchyard at midnight.

"I dun'no what to mek of it," said one. "The cob might have shied at summit, but Mr. Philip ain't easily throwed."

"And yet it be certain that some accident ha' taken place. It may be hard to say what it is. It may be worse than any on us think."

They flashed the lanterns in every direction, but failed to find as yet any solution to the mystery.

They walked slowly and sadly along, examining every portion of the way as they did so.

As they neared the end of Dennett's Lane a cry from the foremost of the party caused a sudden panic.

"What be the matter?" cried the others.

"Matter!" exclaimed the man in front. "Here be our young master lying like one dead. There's bin foul play, mates—Master Philip's been murdered!"

They now gathered round the body of the dead man.

They lowered their lanterns and gazed at his wan features, which too plainly denoted that life had departed.

They looked into each other's faces, and gave a simultaneous cry.

The open gash in the throat, the fractured skull, and the deep pool of blood were evidences of the terrible tragedy which had been enacted.

Philip Jamblin had always been a special favourite with the labourers on Stoke Ferry Farm. It will, therefore, be readily understood that the sight of his remains had a powerful effect upon those who went in search of him.

At first the farm labourers were too much appalled to give expression to their feelings by words.

They stared at the ghastly face in stupid astonishment, then they moaned, and glanced around, as if they expected to see the assassin lurking in some dark corner.

But all was silent—as silent as the grave.

"Who ha' done this deed?" exclaimed Joe Doughty. "A blighting curse cling to 'im, whoever he may be. A blighting curse."

Footsteps were now heard proceeding from the farther end of the road.

The men glanced in the direction from whence they proceeded.

"It be measter a-comin' this way," they exclaimed.

Joe Doughty walked rapidly on in the direction from whence the footsteps proceeded.

In a moment or so he came up with his master, who was hastening to the spot where his son lay in his last sleep.

"How now, Joe?" cried the farmer. "What be the matter, man? What's amiss, eh?"

"You mustn't go any farther. Bide where ye are, measter. Dunno' attempt to go any farther," said Joe.

"And why not? Speak—can't you? Mr. Philip's been throwed?"

"Worse than that," said the man. "Oh, Mr. Jamblin, ye mustn't go no farther!"

He laid hold of the farmer by the coat, and drew him towards the trees by the side of the road.

Jamblin looked at him, and, as he did so, his face became preternaturally pale. There was that in the conduct of Joe which made his master tremble like an aspen bough beneath the blast.

"Summat's happened?" said the farmer, in a low, hoarse whisper.

Joe nodded, but durst not trust himself to speak.

There was a pause, after which Jamblin said, in a voice of perfect calmness:

"Tell me what it is?"

He was a huge, brawny fellow, with a bronzed face, and having hands with thews and sinews like a giant, was this Joe Doughty; but when the farmer's words fell upon his ears they were spoken in a tone altogether so different to that he had been accustomed to hear that, athlete and giant as he was, he seated himself on a felled tree which lay by the side of the road and burst into tears.

The sight of this man, sobbing and crying like an infant, so affected Jamblin that he was fairly overcome, and had not the power to move.

He looked at Joe, and then at the vault of heaven.

"He be taken from us, measter," said the latter, still sobbing; "and he was the best an' truest friend I ha' ever known; an' I would ha' given my life—ten lives, if I 'ad 'em—only to ha' saved his. But it's no yoose a bellowin' or a crying, it be all over now."

"All over!" said the farmer. "What is over?"

"He be dead and gone, measter."

When he heard these last words, Mr. Jamblin made a movement towards the scene of the tragedy.

Joe rose suddenly, and caught him by the skirts of his coat.

"Ye mustn't go there, measter, indeed you mustn't. 'Twill break your heart to see the sight I ha' seen. Bide where ye be."

"Let me go," cried the farmer. "Do 'ee think I am afraid to look the worst in the face?"

"Bide here awhile," repeated the man.

"But I must and will know what's the matter."

"Measter Philip be murdered!"

At these words the farmer stepped back several paces.

"Murdered!" he repeated. "And by whom?"

"I dunno. But I will afore long. By the heaven above, I swear never to rest night or day till I hunt down the infamous wretch who ha' done this foul deed!" exclaimed Joe Doughty, raising his right hand above his head. "I ha' said it, and I mean it, as God is my judge."

"I must look upon my son," cried Jamblin. "So don't 'ee seek to detain me, Joe. Leave go!"

"If it's to be so, I'll go wi' 'ee, measter," replied the latter.

And so the two walked on together towards the fatal spot, for Joe Doughty would not trust his master to go alone.

When they arrived at that part of the road where the dead body of the young farmer lay, the men with the lanterns were more affected by sight of their master than they had been by looking at the stark form of his son.

The agony expressed on the countenance of the elder Mr. Jamblin was painful to behold. He said nothing, but his looks were more eloquent than words.

After he had contemplated the heartrending sight for some little time, he turned towards Joe, who silently led him from the spot.

"It is as you said—he's been foully murdered," whispered Jamblin.

"Get thee back, my dear measter. We will bring the body home."

"Home?" iterated Jamblin.

"Yes, sir, unless you wish it otherwise."

"Poor Patty!" cried the farmer; "it will break her heart."

"Better get home, and leave the rest to us," suggested Joe. "My young missus had best hear it from your lips."

"You are right, I will return," said the farmer. "I leave the arrangements to you—I dare not stop longer."

He walked away with rapid strides, and Joe hastened back to his companions.

They placed the body on a hurdle, then they covered it over with a couple of sacks, and bore it along until they reached Stoke Ferry Farmhouse.

They had the discretion to place it on a bench in a granary,

the door of which they locked, and when all this had been effected in a gentle and thoughtful manner, the farmer was made acquainted with the whole proceedings, at which he expressed his satisfaction.

Patty Jamblin went into hysterics, and the village surgeon was sent for, who pronounced her to be in a very dangerous state. After recovering in a measure from the first shock, she remained in a prostrate condition, and appeared to be but partially conscious of all that was going on.

Her father was more concerned about her than aught else, and perhaps this was a merciful dispensation of Providence. As it was, to a certain extent it diverted his thoughts from the great and irreparable loss he had sustained.

* * * * * * *

The terrible crime committed in Larchgrove Road, the news of which spread like wildfire on the following morning, caused a thrill of horror for miles around. At Broxbridge, Sulwich, and a host of other places, it formed the sole topic of conversation.

Men ran through the streets and stood in knots by the corners, and sat in circles in the alehouses. There was but one look in their faces—there was but one thought in their minds—this was the earnest desire that the murderer of Philip Jamblin should not escape the fate he so justly merited.

On market day there was a mournful meeting at the ordinary, and most of the farmers wore crape on their hats or sleeves.

The Jamblins were greatly respected, and everyone thought of the bereaved father and the suffering sister.

"Poor Phil Jamblin—he was as brave and honest a chap as ever stepped in shoe leather," they said, as they shook their heads, "and never did a morsel o' harm to anyone. I'd hang the scoundrel, whoever he may be—hang 'im on the first tree at hand and try 'im arterwards."

"But who could ha' done it?" said a neighbouring farmer. "Phil never harmed nor quarrelled wi' a soul in his life—leastways, not as I ever heard of."

"It must ha' bin some stranger as did it—a tramp, perhaps," cried another. "There's no saying for sartin."

Many of the young farmers were not content with lamenting Phil, but they scoured the country upon their hunters, examining every strange face with suspicion, and asking questions of all the publicans in the neighbouring villages and towns.

Throngs of persons of almost every denomination flocked to the Carved Lion. It had been "noised abroad" that Brickett saw the murderer washing his hands in a pool of water at Larch Green. This was enough to bring hosts of inquirers to his house to learn the truth from his own lips.

The worthy host of the Lion repeated his statement until he became weary of the narration; but his customers would not let him have any rest—he was forced to comply with their demands.

Every scrap of information connected with the tragedy was eagerly sought after, and retailed afterwards to the wondering village folk.

Exaggerated stories got abroad, and numberless theories were propounded. Somebody who remembered the thrashing Peace received at the hands of the murdered man kindly hinted that he might have committed the crime from motives of revenge.

Brickett was most indignant at this suggestion, which he declared to be both false and scandalous.

It was not possible for Peace to be accused of the murder, seeing that he was in gaol doing his four years at the time it was committed; he was secure enough.

The constabulary took active measures to bring the guilty party within the meshes of the law. Constables were dispatched in every possible direction; notices were sent to the various stations, but as yet no clue had been found to the fugitive.

Miss Jamblin was in a critical state. The surgeon who attended upon her found her weak and dejected as a woman about to die. Her face was furrowed by the traces of the scalding tears she had shed; her pulse was faintly fluttering like a wounded bird. As for her father, he said but little. It was, however, but too plainly shown that a strange change had come over him, and those about him whispered to each other that the old gentleman would never be the same man again.

The inquest was to take place at the Carved Lion, and for the convenience of the coroner and jury the body of the murdered man was brought from Stoke Ferry Farmhouse and placed in one of the private rooms of Brickett's hostelry.

Upon the coroner and jury assembling at the Carved Lion no unseemly merriment took place.

Everybody present conducted themselves in a becoming manner, and many were deeply affected, as the evidence was heard in almost breathless silence. It was not of a nature to fix the guilt upon any one person in particular, nevertheless the facts went far towards pointing to one man as the guilty person.

But the links in the chain of evidence were detached. There was, however, good reason for supposing that they would be strengthened and be made more compact after further investigation.

The knife which the murderer had left behind was found, and was produced by the police on the inquest. In addition to this two human teeth were discovered at a short distance from where the body lay; one of these was broken short off, the other was perfect.

These were considered most important facts, as in the event of the suspected man being captured, the teeth might serve for the purpose of identification.

Brickett was the first witness called. He deposed to the facts already known to the reader. He said he was under the impression that the man washing his hands in the pool at Larch Green was Giles Chudley, but he would not undertake to swear that it was him.

Henry Adolphus gave his evidence in a very creditable manner. He explained the circumstances of his seeing a man running across the meadows. He appeared to be wounded, and from what he could make out the fugitive was bleeding from the nose or mouth, he could not tell which, as he was too far off. He was quite certain, however, that the man was hurt in some way.

Another and more important witness was next examined.

At no very great distance from Larch Green stood a small habitation called "Jawbone Cottage." This name was given to the place in consequence of the jawbones of a whale being on either side of the gateway at its entrance. When placed in their position they formed a pointed arch, around which climbed honeysuckle and clematis.

No one, however, would have taken them to have been bones—certainly not at the first glance. In Jawbone Cottage resided a farm labourer, his wife, and two children; the eldest of these being an intelligent little girl, of eleven or twelve years of age. She was brought forward as a witness. It appeared from what she said that her father and mother had gone from home in the after part of the day on which the murder took place, to see her elder brother off, who was going to sea.

They did not return, however, till late; the witness and her sister, a child of five years old, went to bed at the usual time, but the witness, who had a swollen face, which was very painful, and prevented her from sleeping, got up and looked out of the bedroom window, in the hope of seeing her parents coming along the road.

While thus occupied she observed a great man washing his face and hands in the pool of water on the green. She was so frightened that she hardly durst breathe, but she watched him for some time; she saw that his lip was cut open and that his hands and face were covered with blood.

After this she withdrew from the window and covered herself over with the bedclothes. Mustering courage to go again to the window, she found the man gone.

She was asked to describe him, and in reply said, "He had dark bushy eyebrows and a beaky nose."

She was then asked if she would know him again.

After some little hesitation she said she thought she should be able to recognise him, but was not certain.

Her evidence was taken down very carefully by the coroner's clerk, as it was believed to be very important, as far as the after-proceedings in the case were concerned.

After the little girl's evidence there was a pause in the proceedings. The coroner looked at his summoning officer, who looked at the inspector of police who had the case in hand; then there were whisperings and a low murmur from those assembled in the court, out of which the police inspector took his way; then he returned again, and said something in a whisper to the coroner, who said out loud:

"In the interests of justice it is most desirable that she should be heard; but if she is too ill, and has a doctor's certificate to that effect, we have no other alternative than to adjourn the inquiry."

"I will do what I can," answered the police-officer, who again left the court.

In a minute or so he returned, and nodded significantly to the coroner.

All was now so hushed that, to make use of a common phrase, "you might hear a pin drop."

It was generally understood that the girl Nelly was about to make her appearance, and everybody was on the tip-toe of expectation. Wan and pale, and the very personification

of sorrow, the unhappy girl was now brought in by two female attendants and the police inspector. She was placed in the space set apart for the witnesses, and seemed so overcome that all present were under the impression that she was about to swoon. She bore up, however, in a manner which surprised everybody.

"Your name is Ellen Fulford, I believe?" said the clerk.

"Yes, sir," she returned, in a voice which was scarcely audible to anyone save those who were in close proximity to the speaker.

"Now, don't be alarmed, Miss Fulford," said the coroner in a kind tone. "I do not doubt but this is a painful ordeal for you to go through. We will not ask needless questions or protract it longer than may be absolutely requisite. Take your time in replying to the few interrogations we have to put."

Nell bent her head in acknowledgment of the consideration shown towards her, and the examination proceeded.

"Silence; order in the court!" shouted the usher.

"Well, I'm staggered!—regularly dumbfounded!" murmured the landlord. "It bean't true."

"Order!" was again called, and Brickett remained silent, but he had half a mind to give an open contradiction to the inspector's statement.

"It's right enough," whispered the policeman. "He's quodded. Hold your row!"

"Now, Miss Fulford," said the coroner, addressing himself to the witness, "you have given us, I dare say, a very faithful account of your last interview with the ill-fated young man, Mr. Philip Jamblin. But of the warning you gave him—which, I am sure, everyone must regret that he did not heed. You say a man was behind the hedge during the earlier part of the conversation?"

"Yes, sir. There was a man."

"Could you see his features?"

"Yes. Most distinctly."

THEY PLACED THE BODY ON A HURDLE.

She was asked if she saw Mr. Philip Jamblin on the night of the murder, and replied in the affirmative.

She gave a long account of her conversation with him, which took place near the workshop at one time in the occupation of Charles Peace.

Then a juryman inquired if Peace now resided in the neighbourhood.

"I believe not, sir," said Nell.

"Oh, you believe not—you don't know for certain then?"

"He has not resided in this neighbourhood for some time. He left a little under two years ago," said the inspector. "As far as he is concerned, we are well able to let you know. He was convicted at the last sessions at Sheffield upon a charge of burglary, since which period he has been doing part of his time. He was sentenced to four years' penal servitude"

A murmur ran through the court at this declaration.

"What did he say?" inquired Brickett, of a policeman who stood next to him. "Charles Peace convicted of burglary! It can't be; I dunno' believe it."

"Were they familiar to you?"

"They were."

"Then you knew him?"

"I did. His name is Giles Chudley."

"This you swear?"

"I do."

"You are quite positive as to his being Chudley?"

"I am quite positive."

"Can you describe his appearance?"

"I dunno that I can. He is a tall, strong fellow, with a brown face and bushy eyebrows."

"With a beaky nose?" inquired the coroner, referring to the girl's evidence.

"Yes, his nose is a little beaky."

"That will do, Miss Fulford; we will not trouble you any further to-day. You have given your evidence in a most satisfactory manner."

Nell was taken out of court. What it cost her to go through the ordeal was only known to herself.

The coroner summed up. He said all the evidence went in one direction, this being to throw a dark shade of suspi-

cion upon the man Chudley. Still at present it was not clearly established that he was the murderer of Mr. Jamblin, and if the jury had any doubts they had better not declare him guilty by their verdict. This was but a preliminary inquiry. It was clearly demonstrated beyond all cavil that Mr. Jamblin was foully murdered; it was therefore their duty to declare this by their verdict.

The jury were some time considering, but ultimately returned a verdict of:

"Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown."

Thus the proceedings ended.

"Well, I never!" cried Henry Adolphus, when they had all left. "Mr. Peace convicted of burglary!"

"Oh, there must be some mistake," returned Brickett; "it can't be our Peace—'tain't at all likely—'tain't reasonable to s'pose such a thing. Why, he was one of the best fellows out."

"So everybody ses; but it's 'ard to know people nowadays. Still, I can't b'lieve that tale."

"The p'leece ought to know," suggested a man, holding in his hand a tankard of ale; "if they doesn't know, who does?"

"You just shut up!" cried the landlord. "Nobody asked your 'pinion. I tell 'ee they do not know—so that's enough."

"All right, guv'nor, I be dun; you know these matters a deal better than what I do, I dare say."

After the departure of the coroner, the jury, witnesses, and constables, the people in the Lion threw off all restraint, and conversed freely on the all-absorbing topic. They commented on the evidence with great acumen—I mean rustic acumen.

Everybody agreed upon one point, this being for the murderer of young Jamblin being brought to justice in the shortest possible space of time.

When the funeral of the murdered man took place all the population of Broxbridge and the surrounding districts turned out to do honour to the obsequies of the young farmer.

It was a touching sight to witness the crowds of men, women, and children who swelled the throng of mourners.

Lord Ethalwood's carriage followed. In this were Mr. Jakyl, Henry Adolphus, his lordship's housekeeper, and headgardener, and when Mr. Jamblin bared his white head beside his son's grave the tears fell thick and fast down the faces of the women and children, as well as many of the men.

Joe Doughty sobbed convulsively, and it was indeed a day of general mourning, which was as heartfelt as it was creditable. There is something of the old, heroic, chivalrous spirit yet to be found in the rustic population of this country.

CHAPTER LIV.

Days and weeks passed over, but no clue was found to the murderer of Philip Jamblin. Every effort was made by the police, both London and provincial, but with no satisfactory results.

Many of the rustics were under the impression that Nell Fulford might have made a mistake as to the identity of the man behind the hedge in Dennett's Lane.

They did not say much, but shook their heads and muttered:

"No gell could make certain sure of anyone behind such a thick hedge."

"Maybe she's mistaken," suggested another.

After short, detached observations like these the rustics in Brickett's parlour would lapse again into silence.

Every minute particular was retailed at the village alehouse or elsewhere, and the oft-repeated question was asked:

"Be the man found out yet?"

And when the answer was given in the negative the countenance of the questioner was expressive of regret and disappointment.

Miss Jamblin for the first few days was in so serious a condition as to cause the greatest anxiety to those around her.

When the terrible news reached Oakfield House, John and Maude Ashbrook at once started off for Stoke Ferry Farm to administer what comfort they could to the old farmer and his daughter.

They did much by their presence and kindness to assuage the grief and melancholy which had found their way into the farmer's homestead.

To say the truth, the Jamblins and Ashbrooks were almost like one family, and Patty was never suffered to be alone; either John Ashbrook or his sister was by her side, and very frequently both were with her.

Lord Ethalwood had been most kind and considerate to the Jamblins.

He sent round Henry Adolphus every day to inquire how Patty was—whether she was progressing favourably or otherwise; he also sent his own family physician to see her. In addition to this, he had handbills printed, offering a hundred pounds reward "to any person or persons who would give such information as would lead to the conviction of the murderer of Mr. Philip Jamblin."

Notwithstanding all this, no one was arrested.

Owing in a great measure to the kind ministrations of her father and her two friends, John and Maude Ashbrook, Miss Jamblin recovered from the terrible shock she had received from her brother's untimely end. She was sad, it is true, and her spirits seemed to be crushed, but she was no longer in a dangerous state, and was able to converse freely with her companions, and view matters with something like a spirit of resignation.

One morning the inmates of Stoke Ferry Farmhouse were surprised at seeing Lord Ethalwood's carriage being driven up to the front door of the house, his lordship himself being in the vehicle in question.

The footman signified that the earl desired to speak to Mr. Jamblin, who was of course a little disconcerted, as it was the first time he had been honoured by a visit from so distinguished a personage.

The earl was shown into the best room, and the farmer, in a great state of flustration, entered at once to pay his respects to his landlord.

"Your servant, my lord," said Jamblin; "and many thanks for all your kindness and consideration."

"I am glad to meet you," said the earl, offering his hand. "Pray be seated, Jamblin."

The farmer obeyed. His visitor proceeded:

"I have deemed it a matter of duty to wait upon you for the purpose of offering what poor consolation I can in the hour of your affliction," said the earl, in his usual measured accents. "We've all our trials and troubles in this world, Jamblin. Up to the present time the police have been unsuccessful in their search for the man who committed this atrocious crime. I have offered a reward, as you doubtless know, but it has not been attended with any satisfactory result at present."

"It's very kind of your lordship to take such an interest in this matter, an' I hardly know how to sufficiently thank 'ee."

"There is no need for thanks, but I've been thinking that it would be as well to have recourse to other means to trace out the scoundrel who has imbrued his hand with the blood of an honourable young man."

"Other means?" repeated the farmer, not knowing very well what his visitor was driving at.

"Yes, if it meet with your approval. I dare say you heard that I had occasion to employ an experienced and intelligent detective in a matter of business which was both difficult and intricate—but he succeeded; and for this reason I have the greatest confidence in his discretion and ability. I will, if you have no objection, enlist his services in this matter, which concerns both of us, but you in particular. The gentleman's name is Wrench. And now there is another matter to which I have to make reference. My man tells me that your daughter is somewhat better."

"She be far better than she was."

"Is more herself?"

"She's not quite herself at present—that none ov us can expect—but she be better—a deal better."

"Change of scene is requisite for her. She'll never get well without a change; there are too many things in Stoke Ferry to remind her of a dear brother who is gone. I think it would materially hasten her recovery if she paid a visit to the Hall."

"To where?" inquired Jamblin, who hardly dared trust his ears.

"To Broxbridge Hall—to my residence. My granddaughter would do everything in her power to make her life as cheerful and happy as possible."

The farmer was astonished. The great Lord Ethalwood to invite his daughter as a guest at his manorial residence!

It was hardly credible. He did not know what reply to make.

"I wish and desire Miss Jamblin to be my guest for a few days—or it may be a few weeks. At Broxbridge new scenes will be opened to her, and these will do much in assuaging her grief. Don't misunderstand me, Mr. Jamblin, I shall be glad to receive her. She will be a companion to my grand-daughter Aveline."

The farmer's breath appeared to be taken away.

(To be continued.)

The Bold Border Bandit

How Cole Younger avenged the murder of his Father and the torture of his Mother and Sisters.

"War! War! My noble father!
Thus I fling it;
And fair-eyed peace, farewell!"
—BEAUMONT & FLETCHER, "The Humorous Lieutenant,"
Act I., Sc. 1.

PART II.

AFTER the little free fight on Christmas Day, 1862, Cole was kept busy looking after his sick and wounded, and transporting them from place to place when their temporary hospitals got too warm to hold them. I mentioned that McDowell betrayed his chief. Well, that night Cole and his party had to flee, casting their clothing from them to lighten their burdens, and eventually having to cross the frozen ground barefoot. McDowell placed them under an obligation to him which they paid the first time they caught sight of him. He met the fate of all traitors.

It would be wearisome to give an account of the daily scrimmages which Cole was engaged in during the spring and summer of 1863, and we will pass on at once to one of the important engagements in which he took part. In August, '63, Lieutenant Taylor went into Lawrence, a Kansas town, and reconnoitred. A week later he brought Captain Quantrell full plans of the place, and mentioned that only a short time before 310 jayhawkers had been despatched from Lawrence on a mission of rapine. Incidentally he mentioned that the same jayhawkers had killed 200 defenceless men and women during the preceding three months. That was enough for Quantrell. Hastily he sent round word to all his friends, and a grand muster took place at Blackwater on August 16. Then Taylor was bidden repeat his report, which he did, and Quantrell asked:

"What do you think, lads?"

"Lawrence or hell!" was the startling reply from Anderson, a fine young man who had but recently picked the dead body of his own sister from among the ruins of the guard-house in Kansas City which Captain Walley had caused to be wrecked over the heads of thirty defenceless women, among whom were Cole's sisters, detained therein.

"Lawrence, if I knew that not a man would return," was Todd's reply. And the others voted in the same way. Then the order was given to saddle up, and the troop rode out to sack the distant town.

It took four days' marching through country infested with enemies before Quantrell got within striking distance of Lawrence. Then he rested for a night, and at daybreak on August 21 the lads made a dash into the town, riding four abreast down the streets and firing their revolvers.

Oh, it was a day of slaughter; of red blood flowing, and hissing bullets, and shrieks from attackers and attacked. Through a perfect maelstrom of missiles the troop rode into the enemy's camp, and took it; citizens were shot down whenever they showed themselves, not a militiaman went unscathed. The tale of dead Kansians was about 215, while Quantrell lost a few of his men. Wounds were counted as nothing, for hardly a skin was whole that evening. When the slaughter was over, the Confederates fired the town and rode off in triumph.

As an immediate result of this raid, General Ewing, the Union Commandant at St. Louis, issued his celebrated Order 11, which was to the effect that the western counties of Missouri should be depopulated. The people were horror-struck, but had to obey, and soon an army of 6,000 Union militia was on the trail of the guerillas. It was clearly impossible for the Confederates to keep together, so they split up into bands of ten, and so harassed the pursuers. It was then that the full horrors of guerilla warfare were experienced. The Unionists, to strike terror into the hearts of their foes, stooped so low as to scalp their victims. That roused the Confederates' blood, and thereafter every notable militiaman that was slain was scalped, and his body treated with ignominy. In the savage lust for blood, the men became brute beasts, and every diabolical deed of the Union men was copied, with embellishments, by their enemies. In a word, hell was let loose throughout the Border States of America.

It was during this period of carnage, of savagery, and of fierce reprisals, that Cole Younger became captain of his band, Quantrell and Jarrette, his superiors, having betaken themselves to other parts of the country. He directed his efforts to putting down the bands of cotton thieves that were devastating the country, and he was temporarily attached to General Shelby's division. As a leader he soon made a mark, and in 1864, when General Marmaduke requested his colleague Shelby to send him his forty best men, Cole was asked to take his troop and place himself and it under Marmaduke's orders. His men were looked on as the very cream of the Confederate forces. As his right hand man Cole had Joe Lea, and in his company as a private soldier was Frank James, the scout, whose name is well known, but who, in reality, was only an ordinary guerilla, and not one of the smartest at that. James never rose into eminence; he never was entrusted with a command, he never acted on his own initiative, yet he was given the credit for being the king of scouts, and those who taught him, who instructed him, who formed the plans which he blindly carried out, were ignored.

General Marmaduke ordered Cole to take his company and patrol the line of pickets from Warren, Arkansas, to the Missouri River. This he did, and combined duty with pleasure, for he looted several convoys which he met, and generally harassed the enemy on all occasions. At the town of Little Rock he had a skirmish, in which he got a bullet through his leg, and then he returned, having made the grand round of the outposts, as instructed.

Cole was recognised as too good a man to be kept doing routine work, and Marmaduke immediately despatched him to Colorado to intercept some of the supply trains of the enemy, and to cut the Transcontinental telegraph wires. This he did, but unfortunately the trains contained nothing of value. Then he was sent off on secret service. His duty was to make his way to Victoria, British Columbia, and there take over two vessels of the Alabama type which had been built for the Confederates in England. With him was associated Captain Kennedy, who had the necessary papers for the two steamers. On the way to San Francisco, Cole had two fights with the Indians. The first, when he was attacked by Comanches, was a mere skirmish; but the second, when his foes were Apache Mojaves, was a serious battle, which lasted for thirty-six hours. To use his own words: "The Reds were pestiferous, and kept us busy for fully thirty-six hours plugging them at every opportunity." In the end the "pestiferous" Indians were annihilated, and Kennedy and Cole proceeded on their way to 'Frisco.

At the seaport they disguised themselves as Mexican miners, and took steamer to Victoria. Arrived there, ready to take over the two vessels which were to be used against the Unionists, they were met with the news that General Lee had surrendered at Appomattox, and that in consequence the war was over. They had had their journey in vain. They were bitterly disappointed, but, of course, could do nothing. Kennedy returned to Marmaduke, but Cole remained in Victoria for a short time, and then went to Los Angelos, hoping to make a little money there before he returned to his own home. His brother Jim had been driven by the brutality of the militia to his mother and sisters to join the Confederate army early in '64, and Cole waited to hear what was going to be the position of the guerillas before going into dangerous ground.

On April 8, 1865, the State of Missouri adopted the Drake Constitution, by which all Confederates and all who had sympathised with the Southerners were outlawed. Union soldiers were granted amnesty for all their lawless acts, but Confederates were held responsible for everything. A more flagrant piece of injustice can hardly be imagined. As a result of this iniquitous act, many States had to be officered by men imported from the North of America, for their own public men were debarred from office. Then self-constituted sheriffs, with private grudges to settle, organised posses and attacked those who were outlawed, knowing that action could not be taken by the ex-Confederates.

Towards the end of 1865 Cole returned to Jackson County, Missouri, to try and gather together the few fragments of the family fortune which the militiamen had been unable to steal.

While he was doing this he learnt that Mr. Judy, father of the lad who was shot by Quantrell's men in the Paola raid, had organised a posse, and was going to seize him on the false indictment which he had sworn in Kansas. Cole knew perfectly well that if seized he would be shot or hanged, instead of being brought to trial, so he went immediately and consulted Judge Tutt and Governor King, both of whom advised him to run for it, for they said that even if a jury could be found who would give him a fair trial, the mob had been so stirred up by Walley and Judy that he would assuredly be lynched. The poor young man was then engaged to be married, and was desirous of settling down and forgetting the horrors of the past four years, but he was forced to abandon his sweetheart and flee for his life. The very night after he had left, Judy and a mob of roughs made a raid into Jackson County, where Judy had no legal standing at all, and broke into Younger's house. Their bird had flown; so, after ill-treating those who were left behind, they made tracks back again into Cass County, where they were safe.

Cole took refuge with his uncle, Thomas Friscoe, in Howard County, and it was while he was there that the first of a series of outrages which were laid to his credit took place. One fine morning a party of scoundrels rushed into the bank at Liberty, and, having shot the cashier and threatened the other clerks at the point of the pistol, secured a large sum of money and fled. Walley and Judy immediately spread the report that Cole Younger and his brother James were the perpetrators of this robbery, and it was impossible for Cole to come out of hiding and refute the charges, because by so doing he would have drawn the wrath of the unscrupulous Walley and Judy down on the heads of the innocent folk who were sheltering him. Just after this Liberty crime Cole moved to Louisiana, and rented the Bass Farm, on the banks of Lake Providence, in Carroll Parish. There he remained till 1867, when he was forced by ill-health to return to Missouri. In 1868 he took his mother and his brothers, Jim and Bob, to Syene, Dallas County, Texas, where he remained for three years raising cattle. Jim entered public life, and was deputy-sheriff of Dallas County in '70 and '71. Bob was only seventeen, and was greatly upset by the rumours which connected the Youngers with every one of the important crimes which took place. Living in the house with the Youngers were several well-known persons, and they could swear that Cole and his brothers could not have committed the outrages which were laid to their credit.

Rumour, too, charged Cole with other offences which were odious and which cannot be repeated here. On one occasion, however, Cole Younger had a chance of vindicating his character. A certain Captain White was very assiduous in circulating a scandalous story, in which Cole's name was associated with an innocent young lady, and, hearing that White was at a certain race-meeting in Louisiana, Cole, who was also present, sent him word that he would have to apologise or fight the first time they met. Captain White had a reputation for duelling, and he sought out Cole after the races were over, and the pair adjourned to a wood to fight it out. At the first shot Younger smashed his opponent's right shoulder and put him out of action. White sent his second across to ask Cole to come and speak to him, and apologised for his conduct. Then Younger went back to Texas.

Of course this duel was magnified into a story of a midnight ambush, in which the outlaw had attempted to murder his enemy, but those who knew the facts of the case looked on Cole as a champion of the oppressed and feared him. On one occasion this reputation was of use. The belongings of a poor widow were to be sold up, and Cole got to hear of it. He immediately went to the woman, and learnt that the debt was 80 dollars, which he promptly gave her, with instructions to bid that amount at the auction. Then he sought out the auctioneer and told him to put all the goods up in one lot, and to knock them down to the widow, assuring him that he would stand close to the rostrum with his pistol handy. The auctioneer did as he was told, in spite of the grumbling of the mob, and when the widow offered eighty dollars as the very first bid, the knight of the hammer glanced at Cole, and saw the muzzle of the revolver pointing towards him. He did not wait for any more offers and immediately concluded the sale.

The only one of the Younger family who was really a bit loose in his habits was John. While quite a lad John shot a man named Gillcreas, who tried to murder him with a slung shot. That was fair fighting, and he was acquitted of the crime, and, as he was only fourteen, was looked on rather as a hero. This was bad for the lad, and as he grew up he became a bit of a swashbuckler.

In 1871 John was a clerk in a Texas warehouse, and was noted for his drinking and roystering habits. On the afternoon of January 16, being in a playful mood, John shot the pipe out of the mouth of a man named Russell, who was drinking in the same bar with him. Russell grew frightened and ran out of the saloon, and the other loungers in the public-house shouted out to John, "Don't kill him!" This made Russell think that John had meant to murder him, and he immediate swore an information against him, and next morning Captain Nichols and a party came to the Youngers' house to arrest the culprit.

John expressed his willingness to go with the officers, but asked them to have some breakfast. This they declined, and took him down the town with them. All stopped at a bar for a drink, and a squabble arose, in the course of which a brother of the man Russell fired at Younger. On that John "loosed his shooting-iron," and killed a man named MacMahon, while some of the party managed to shoot Captain Nichols. While the fray was progressing furiously in the bar, John and a youth named McDaniells, who had shot one of the guard, went out, took the officers' horses, and rode away. John vanished into the wilds of California for a time, and returned to Missouri in the winter of 1873-74. At that time the police were searching for all the Youngers, for they were suspected of having committed a number of robberies,

Apologised for his conduct.

and Pinkerton's detective agency sent an inspector named Whicher to arrest them. Instead, Whicher got on the trail of Frank and Jesse James, who were regarded as dangerous criminals, and, alas! the brothers James shot Whicher dead.

A few days later three detectives named Allen, Wright, and Daniels came on Jim, John, and Bob Younger at the Springs. Wright lost his head and fled; Allen shot John Younger in the neck, whereupon John shot Daniels dead, and rode after Allen, who was running away. Into the body of the detective John emptied his revolver, killing him, and then toppled off his own horse, stone dead. The other two Youngers escaped.

This happened at an unfortunate time, for an Amnesty Bill was under discussion at the moment, and of course it was immediately dropped. Pinkerton's Agency were much angered at the loss of their detectives, and they commenced a campaign of vengeance. One night a band of Pinkerton's men, under the guidance of a scoundrel named Daniel Askew, whom they had bribed, surrounded the house of the Jameses' mother and threw a bomb into it. The explosion killed an eight-year-old boy, tore off the left arm of the mother, and wounded a crowd of innocent folk, but neither Frank nor Jesse James was captured.

Now we come to the great crime of Cole Younger's life. He and his brothers had been accused of any number of bank robberies of which they were entirely innocent; Mrs. Younger

had been tortured and harassed, as we have seen, and had died as a result of the hardships to which she had been exposed; John Younger had been shot by detectives; Jim, Bob, and Cole were outlaws, with every man's hand against them, and with no hope of getting a fair trial.

Cole reviewed the situation, and made out a tabulated statement of a few of the outrages of which he was accused, and of the place where he had evidence to prove he was at the time of the crime. Here it is:

Offence.	Date.	Younger was at
Liberty Robbery	1866	Howard County.
Lexington Bank.....	Oct., 1866	
Savannah Bank	Mar., 1867	Bass Farm, Carroll parish, Louisiana.
Richmond Bank	May, 1867	
Russellville, Kentucky, Bank	Mar., 1868	
Gallatin Bank	1869	Austin, Texas.
Corydon, Iowa, Bank.....	June, 1871	Louisiana.
Columbia, Kentucky, Bank,	April, 1872	Neosho Falls, Kansas.
Kansas City Fair robbery	Sept., 1872	With friends at Independence all day.
Wrecking Rock Island Train, Iowa	July, 1873	St. Clair County, Missouri.
Hold-up of Malvern Stage	Jan., 1874	Carroll Parish, Louisiana.
St. Genevieve Bank.....	May, 1873	St. Clair County, Missouri.
Gad's Hill Train Robbery	Jan., 1874	Carroll Parish, Louisiana.

Add to this record of great crimes the numberless small offences with which he was charged, and of which he was innocent, and remember the fact that he had not the remotest chance of getting a fair trial if he surrendered, and his state of mind can be understood when he decided to make one big raid and retire to Cuba or Australia with the proceeds, there to start life afresh.

It came to his knowledge that General Butler, one of the most relentless and truculent of the Union soldiers, had deposited a very large sum of money in the First National Bank at Northfield, Minnesota, and Cole determined to get it. He summoned his two brothers, Jim and Bob, and his trusty friends Clell Miller, Bill Chadwell, Pitts, Howard, and Woods. These set out for Minneapolis, where they stayed for a week, and then went across to St. Paul, where they spent another week getting information. The party then split, the Coles and Bob Younger and Pitts and Chadwell going to St. Peters to purchase horses, and the others making their way to Red Wing for the same purpose.

Bob Younger and Chadwell missed the train, and so

THE SURRENDER AFTER NORTHFIELDS.

caused some anxiety to Cole and Pitts, who waited for them at Madelia. Eventually all met at the rendezvous at Mankato, and a few days were spent in getting to know the lie of the land to the west of that town, for the robbers determined to make for the western shores of the States with their booty. Then they marched to Northfield, taking several days over the journey, and spreading so as not to attract attention, and on Thursday morning, September 7, 1876, they re-united outside the town. The bank lay in a little by-street leading from the market square, not fifty yards down the road, behind a large store.

The plan of campaign was as follows: Bob, Pitts, and Howard were to go to the square and wait till Cole and Miller came up before entering the bank. Cole and his companion were to prevent anybody from entering the doomed bank, and could summon the rest of the gang, who were waiting at the bridge some hundred and fifty yards away, by means of a pistol-shot. Unfortunately, Pitts and Bob Younger had been drinking, and did not follow out the plan, but went at once into the bank and seized Mr. Heywood, the cashier, whom they tried to force to open the safe. Heywood declared that it was a time lock, and he could not open it.

When Cole and Miller came up they saw through the door that the bank was in the hands of Bob and Co., and so stopped a man named Allen who was about to enter. Allen ran off shouting, "Get your guns! the bank is being robbed!" Then a fast and furious free fight commenced. A Mr. Stacey seized a shot-gun and emptied it into Miller's face, and then a Dr. Wheeler potted at the robbers from a window in the square.

The sound of firing brought up the reserve force, and soon the square was ringing with pistol shots and hissing with bullets. Suddenly the sound of a shot was heard coming from the bank, and the next minute Bob Younger staggered out, and was hit on the elbow by a bullet from one of the windows. Pitts and Howard then came into the road, and said that they had shot Heywood, the cashier. A shot then bowled Miller over, and another passed through Chadwell's heart. Cole got a wound through the thigh and several other injuries. It was clear that nothing was to be done but make for the country, and, after a desperate struggle, the party managed to gain the high road, leaving poor Miller and Chadwell dead on the ground. It had been part of the scheme to wreck the telegraph office, but, owing to the plan failing, they were unable to do so. The whole country was then up in arms in a very short time. Immediately large rewards were offered for the capture of the culprits, and the place became too hot to hold the fugitives.

Moving by night and hiding by day, the robbers managed to get as far as Mankato, where Woods and Howard stole a couple of horses and made off by themselves. They were never captured.

Bob's arm was so bad that he could only sleep with it resting on Cole's breast; Jim's shoulder was shattered, and Cole's leg gave him a lot of trouble. It was a time of pain and anxiety to them all, yet they managed to reach Madelia, outside which they hid. But they were detected, and an armed posse came out to the scrub where they were, and surrounded them. Then six volunteers, under Colonel Vought, entered the bush, and tried to capture the four wounded men. Game to the last, the three Youngers and Pitts made a dash for freedom, emptying their revolvers at the foe, but they were all struck down and captured. Pitts was killed by a bullet through his heart, Jim Younger had five wounds, including one which shattered his upper jaw, and Cole was bleeding from a dozen bullet holes. Bob was shot through the right lung.

The sheriff treated the captives most humanely, and when their wounds were partly healed they were put on trial. They pleaded guilty, and were sentenced to imprisonment for life, the law of Minnesota then making it illegal to hang a man who pleaded guilty.

So in November they were taken to Stillwater Gaol, where Bob died in 1889. Cole and Jim earned the respect of everyone connected with the prison, and in July, 1901, were conditionally released. Liberty did not agree with Jim, who grew morbid, and eventually committed suicide in October, 1902. In February, 1903, Cole was granted a complete pardon, in place of the ticket-of-leave, on the sole conditions that he never returned to Minnesota State nor exhibited himself in public. He gave the required promises, retired to Missouri, and, joining Frank James, who was amnestied, started a species of "Wild West Show" to earn his daily bread. He was a man more sinned against than sinning.

The Lawyer Collapsed.

"Now, sir," began the ferocious-looking barrister, "attend to me. Is this your handwriting?"

"I think not," replied the meek-looking witness.

"Does it at all resemble your handwriting?"

"I can't say that it does."

"Do you swear that it does not resemble your writing. Now, no trifling, if you please!"

"I do."

"Ah, but will you take your solemn oath that this writing does not resemble yours?"

"Ye-e-s, sir."

"Well, just tell the court how you know."

Here the legal bully looked triumphantly around him.

"'Cause I can't write!"

Legal collapse.

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"... Much of Madness, and more of Sin
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—EDGAR ALLEN POE,
"The Conqueror Worm."

"YOU have a room to let, madame?" queried a tall, handsome young man of Madame Devœux, the proprietress of a house in the Rue Poliveau, one morning in March, 1878. "Certainly. Would monsieur like to see it?" was the ready response. Bestirring herself, madame led the way upstairs and opened the door of a small apartment, meagrely furnished. Striking an attitude, she went into raptures over the convenience of the lodging, the excellence of the furniture. "There was not much of it, certainly; but what would you? Surely monsieur must see that he had the more room to move about. The view? Well, it was not very charming; but the air—no one could say how good the air was!" and so on, after the manner of her kind. The young man cast a hurried glance round the chamber, noted that it was very ill-kept and dirty, from which he argued that he would not often be troubled by the concierge, and saw that in one corner there was a large cupboard. Asking for the key, he opened it, smiled to himself, and said that he would take the room, apparently thinking that solitude and the cupboard amply compensated him for dirt and a landscape of chimney pots. To clinch his bargain he paid deposit of the rent, took the key of the cupboard and of the apartment, and bade good-bye to portly Madame Devœux.

Early next morning—it was the 24th of March—he returned bearing a large parcel. Telling the concierge that he would not be staying there that night, he went upstairs, and ten minutes later descended without his bundle. At the door he was stopped and asked to sign the register of tenants, which he did, entering himself as "Emile Gerard, aged 26, a student."

A week went by, and M. Gerard did not return. The landlady grew a little anxious, and going upstairs, she opened the door. In the apartment there was an overpowering smell. Hastily opening the window, she called to another lodger to come and help her, and between them they forced the door of the cupboard. There lay the parcel which Emile had brought. Madame cut the string which bound the bundle, opened it, and forthwith fainted. The lodger glanced at the contents, and, without waiting to revive madame, bolted downstairs and summoned the nearest gendarme. The parcel was forthwith taken to the police station and carefully examined. In it were two human legs and two arms, wrapped round with several old chemises. The limbs were undoubtedly those of a female well advanced in years, and the surgeons were able to say that they had been severed from the trunk by someone who had a certain knowledge of anatomy. On the skin were marks which showed that a

struggle had taken place shortly before death, and from the general appearance it was highly probable that the members had been amputated immediately after death had ensued. On the left arm there was a scar as of an old burn, and this, together with the initials "L. M.," marked on the chemises, formed all the clues to the identity of the remains, which were at once taken to the Morgue and exposed to view.

A few days later M. Macé, whom we have met before as head of the Parisian Police, was sitting in his office when a gendarme came in and told him that for some days an elderly woman named Gillet had been missing. She used to keep a little milk stall in the Latin Quarter in the mornings, and during the daytime earned her living by charing. She had been engaged by several persons, but had not gone to their houses to do any work, while she had not been seen at her usual place since the 23rd of March.

Instinctively, M. Macé connected the old milk-woman and the severed limbs, and told the constable to find out where the woman had lived, and to see if there was anybody who

Opened the bundle and fainted.

had known her intimately. Soon the policeman came back with the news that he had found out where the old woman had lodged, and had also unearthed a crony who had at one time shared a room with the missing woman, besides a large number of people who had been friends of Madame Gillet's. A visit to the Morgue did not result in much, save that the old dame said that she thought the arms were those of Madame Gillet, who had once burnt herself badly while ironing.

M. Macé examined the lodgings which Gillet had occupied. After turning the whole place upside down, the chief of police discovered £20 in bonds and gold hidden in a night-cap stuffed in a hole in the wainscoting. "So she had money, then?" remarked Macé to the neighbours who were watching.

"Oh, monsieur, more than that—more than that! She was rich—a miser. She had thousands of francs—thousands," exclaimed the neighbours in chorus.

That was indefinite, but by hard questioning Macé managed to elicit the facts that the woman had at least £520 which she had invested, and which she was intending to transfer into other securities. "I know," said one old hag, who looked as if she didn't possess a couple of francs in the world, "for she asked me who was the best broker to employ, and I told her that I always engaged M. Barré when I wanted to invest any of my money."

Among the papers and old envelopes which comprised Madame Gillet's treasures, M. Macé found several memoranda of purchases of stock, and by circulating particulars of these among the money-changers, he learnt that several of them had been converted into cash on the 24th of March by M. Barré. It was clear, then, that the broker had changed them after Madame Gillet had disappeared. At any rate, no harm now could be done by a bold move.

Ordering the Morgue attendants to bring the severed limbs and the garments to the police office, M. Macé sent an officer to request Barré to call on him. The broker accompanied the messenger back to the Hotel de Ville, and was introduced to the clever chief.

"Good morning, M. Barré," was the cheerful greeting of M. Macé. "When did you do this?" he pursued, as he whipped a cloth off a heap lying on a table, and disclosed the partially decomposed legs and arms, with the blood-stained chemises lying beside them.

Barré turned livid, ejaculated "Mon Dieu!" and fell back fainting.

When he had recovered a little, the inexorable officer continued, "You might as well make a clean breast of it all now. You see, we know everything. Your confederates are under lock and key." That was a bold shot, but Macé saw that Barré did not correspond with the description of Emile Gerard, and thus argued that he had been helped by at least one person.

Believing that the game was up, Barré then told the police officer the following story. He said that he was the son of respectable folk who lived in Angers, and he had been brought up at the college in that town. While at school he had formed a strong friendship with one Emile Lebiez, and when they both became men they came to Paris together, Lebiez to study medicine, and Barré to become a notary. Gambling on the Bourse, or Stock Exchange, however, showed him that he could make money easily that way, and he had abandoned the idea of being a notary, and had started business as an outside broker. He and Lebiez lived a very fast life, both keeping mistresses, besides gambling considerably, and they had become very hard up. It was then that Madame Gillet had applied to him to arrange for the transfer of some stock, and had told him that she possessed at least six hundred pounds. He told Lebiez all about it, and the two determined to get possession of the cash and pay off their most pressing liabilities. "You will stun her and leave the rest to me," said Lebiez while they were discussing the best means of obtaining the bonds. "What! Shall we murder her?" responded Barré. "It is hardly murder. She is old, and will soon die; besides, we must have that money," replied Lebiez. So Barré consented, and the precious pair made preparations for their victim. To dispose of her body they had a large box made and conveyed into Barré's room, where his mistress, Léontine Morris, or Léontine Lepin, dwelt with him. This was done, and on the morning of March 23 Barré sent Lepin out, and then went to the milk-seller's stand and asked her to bring him some milk at once. She came almost immediately, and as she entered the room Barré struck her on the head with a hammer. Instantly Lebiez rushed on her, stabbing her with a long knife which he had purchased for the purpose. She did not die immediately, but managed to struggle a little. When she was quite dead, the murderers tried to cram her body into the box, but found that it was a little too small, and so Lebiez said that he would have to cut off her limbs. His knowledge of anatomy enabled him to do so neatly, and the trunk was then stuffed into the packing case, and the arms and legs wrapped up in some old chemises belonging to Léontine Morris. Barré then called a commissionaire and had the box removed to the terminus of the Orleans Railway, himself taking a ticket to Mans, which he did not use. The limbs were entrusted to Lebiez, who looked out for a room with a cupboard into which to put the ghastly package. Eventually he took the apartment in the Rue Poliveau, as we have related.

The clothes of the murdered woman were given to Léontine when she returned to clean up the mess which her master and his friend had made.

In the pocket of the skirt Barré found the key of his victim's lodgings, and he immediately went there and secured the bonds for which he had risked so much. On March 24 he converted them into cash, which he divided with his accomplice, and then went on with his daily work as if nothing had happened.

We can imagine how pleased the chief of the police was to learn that his theory was correct, for it must be remem-

bered that he really had not a single scrap of valid evidence against Barré, while he was in total ignorance of the identity of Lebiez and of Léontine Morris or Lepin. However, having reduced Barré's story to writing, and forced him to sign it, he saw that he had the whole gang at his mercy. Warrants were instantly issued for the arrest of Lebiez and Lepin, and gendarmes sent to execute them forthwith, while Barré was taken off to a cell in the Conciergerie.

There was no difficulty in finding Lebiez, for he had secured a position as manager of the Socialist paper, "Père Duchêne," and he was speedily taken into custody, while Léontine, who protested her entire ignorance of the matter, was captured at the lodgings of her paramour.

After the customary preliminary investigations, all three were placed in the dock at the Assize Court of the Seine on July 29, 1878, Barré and Lebiez charged with murdering Madame Gillet, and Lepin accused of complicity and of receiving her property. Contrary to the procedure in England, the charges were heard at the same time.

The entire first day of the trial was occupied by reading Barré's confession and cross-examining him on it. He maintained stoutly that the blow which he dealt the unfortunate woman was not mortal, and would not have caused death. It did not even stun her, as he had intended it should. He had been dominated by Lebiez in everything. He wanted the money, but he really did not want to murder the old woman; however, Lebiez had assured him that it was the only method of getting what he wanted, and he had obeyed.

On the second day one of Lebiez's many mistresses was called to formally prove that her lover had been with her on the night of March 22, and had left her very early on the morning of the murder. While her evidence was being read over she fainted, and then went into hysterics, creating a great disturbance, and at length was borne out of the court, ejaculating, "I am the only one he loves! The others are only harlots! He loves me alone!" When she had recovered a little she was brought back and signed the deposition.

Lebiez himself was then examined. He commenced by saying that he was manager of the "Père Duchêne," and that the paper was supported by a German baroness. "Let us hear nothing about the German baroness!" exclaimed the judge. "The affair is shocking as it is, and we do not want the Germans dragged into it. The paper has nothing to do with the matter in hand." Then Lebiez went on to say that he had dismembered the corpse. "I did that job very neatly, didn't I?" boasted the truculent beast. "I have not forgotten my old knack. You should have seen how neatly I turned out the joints. They simply came out with a click. That was science; not mere butchery. If you examine the corpse, M. le Juge, you will see that I have really done my work very well. Not a muscle is spoilt. I let the old woman struggle a little because I did not want to spoil her body. I wanted to kill her scientifically. Oh, yes; she scratched; but what would you? She was afraid of the knife; they all are. It was a neat, clean stab that finished her. No bungling for me."

Everybody in court was disgusted at the vaunting of Lebiez, and were heartily glad when he was told that his examination was at an end. Yet, to look at, he was intelligent and refined, while the lesser sinner, Barré, was rather commonplace, with dark beard and moustaches. The evidence with regard to Lepin was simple enough. She was merely a woman of the town who had found Barré a convenience, and who lived with him. She had sold the clothes belonging to Madame Gillet, and had asked no questions. She washed up the blood on the floor, but she did not think that a murder had been committed, and thought her lover was joking when he told her that he had killed "Old Mother Gillet."

"GOOD MORNING, M. BARRÉ; WHEN DID YOU DO THIS?"

The jury took rather a merciful view in her case and, while they found Barré and Lebiez guilty of murder without any extenuating circumstances, declared that she had merely received stolen goods. The judge agreed with the verdict, and ordered the two murderers to suffer death on the guillotine, while he directed that Léontine Morris should be confined in prison for three years. "Down with the Republic!" shouted Lebiez as he was taken from the dock, but Barré wore no air of bravado—in fact, he was almost unconscious.

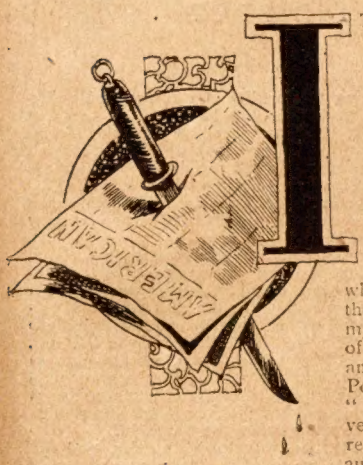
The condemned were taken to the prison of La Roquette and placed in the condemned cells to await execution, not knowing whether each morning was their last on earth, for the French do not announce to the doomed the date of their expiation.

One morning, about three weeks after they had been condemned, M. de Paris, the executioner, entered the condemned cell and said that he was ready for the prisoners. A few moments later and their heads rolled into the sawdust in the wicker basket beneath the fatal guillotine, and the murder of Madame Gillet had been avenged.

MRS. VOEPEL
Mysteriously Murdered.

"Like a Page from Poe."

"Tremble, thou wretch,
That has within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipped of Justice."
—SHAKESPEARE, "King Lear," Act II., Sc. 2.



IT is doubtful whether Sir Conan Doyle, in our admiration of whose genius we yield to none, has written a more ingenious detective story than Edgar Allan Poe's "Murder in the Rue Morgue. The inductive reasoning the gloomy poet applies to the solution of what appears to be at the outset an insoluble mystery. In the matters of analytical acumen and logical deductions, Poe's "Dupin" runs "Sherlock Holmes" very closely. It will be remembered that the author of "Tales of Mystery and Imagination" brings the brutal murder of an old lady and her daughter home to a ferocious ourang-outang who escapes from his master—a French sailor—with a razor in his grasp. This ghastly story supplies an almost faultless example of the process of "exhaustion of evidence."

Many of the features characterised the mysterious murder of Mrs. Voepel, in her bedroom on a third-storey flat in Christopher Street, New York. The lady, who "ran" a highly lucrative "news-stand" built outside the house in which she was so cruelly done to death, lived with her son, a promising, circumspect, and affectionate young fellow of seventeen. Mrs. Voepel, who was forty years of age, and of handsome presence, not only lived with, but—so the neighbours testified—lived for this lad. Her main—indeed, her only—anxiety was provision for his future.

Nobody appeared to know anything about her matrimonial history. All that was evident was that she worked early and late for the means to assure the welfare of her boy. If there was any romance in her life she carefully concealed it from her neighbours and her customers, with whom she was exceptionally popular. To them she seemed to lead an unruffled, homely, money-making existence. The most spiteful of the gossips were unable to rake up any differences between the doting mother and her son.

One raw February morning, feeling too indisposed to rise, and, as was her wont, open the news-stand at six o'clock, her son cheerfully undertook the task. Resolved not to disturb his mother, young John Voepel, who was always smartly groomed, stuck to his post uninterruptedly until ten o'clock. At that hour a man named Charles Watts, who collected the rent of a house which Mrs. Voepel owned in Hoboken, called at the news-stand and found the lad calmly sitting at the receipt of custom. He requested an interview with his mother, saying that he had business of importance to transact with her. John, in whose manner no agitation was observable, left Watts in charge of the stand, and skipped away to convey the message to his mother.

Young Voepel returned in fourteen or fifteen minutes in a state of hysterical excitement. Wringing his hands, which were stained with newly-shed blood, he sobbed, "Oh, Watts! somebody has killed my dear mother!" Watts was paralysed with amazement. The boy raced to the nearest police station and described the spectacle which met his view when he entered his mother's bedroom. The officers of the law found that the ill-fated lady had been stabbed no fewer than seventeen times. Several of the thrusts were made through the heart. The medical men who were summoned to the scene, after closely examining the body, declared that the wounds were of such a nature that they could only have been inflicted

"SOMEBODY HAS KILLED MY DEAR MOTHER!"

by an assailant of immense strength. John Voepel was a slightly-built stripling, with no pretensions to more than ordinary muscular power.

A butcher's knife, which Mrs. Voepel was known to possess, and which she used for the purpose of cutting bread, was missing. The detectives made an exhaustive search for it on their first visit, but found it not. Renewing their investigation a day later, one of New York's smartest sleuth-hounds said to young Voepel casually:

"It was strange how that knife disappeared."

"What knife?" asked John.

"The butcher's knife," was the reply.

"But it hasn't disappeared. I found it lying on the floor here, and I've put it in the kitchen cupboard."

In the kitchen cupboard it was found.

The police arrested a neighbouring butcher, with whom the slaughtered newsvendor was known to have had a bit of a "tiff," but he was easily able to clear himself of suspicion.

The points of resemblance between the slaying of Mrs. Voepel and the "Murders in the Rue Morgue" were the evidence of a brute rage to mangle the victim, the proofs that the newsvendor was dressing at the time she was attacked, the fact that neither the occupants of the room above nor the lodgers in that beneath Mrs. Voepel's apartments heard the slightest sound of a struggle or of footsteps, save those of young John. It might be that, as in the case of Poe's ourang-outang, the murderer of Mrs. Voepel had entered by the window. If so, he had closed it upon his return journey through it. It was clearly demonstrated that the death-struggle had commenced in the kitchen, but the coups de grâce were delivered in the bedroom where the brutal crime was committed.

In the death-clutch of the murdered woman was found a man's ready-made black satin tie, and on the floor of the bedroom was discovered a peculiar button, evidently torn from the coat of the miscreant who slew the newsvendor. Neither the tie nor the button belonged to John Voepel. Sticking to the tie were hairs of a man's head. Here, again, the story of Poe is conjured up. In the hand of the victim of that hideous tragedy were clasped what proved to be the hairs of an ape.

Not unnaturally, when all the circumstances of the crime are surveyed, considerable suspicion attached to young Voepel, but there were the absence of motive, the evidence of the affectionate relations between mother and son, the nature of the mortal wounds, and the briefness of the lad's absence from the side of Mr. Watts, whom he left as calmly as if he had been going to his breakfast. Whatever the motive for the ferocious attack upon the unfortunate woman may have been, it was not plunder. If it was, the villain who stabbed his victim seventeen times was disturbed in his bloody work before he had time to secure his booty. A large sum of money which Mrs. Voepel had in the house was found intact. John Voepel knew about its existence. It was proved, too, that he knew its whereabouts. The murdered woman's handsome gold watch was found on the dressing-table. Her valuable diamond ring was upon her finger. Who killed Kate Voepel? And why was she slaughtered? Echo alone answers "Who?" and "Why?"

It may not be inappropriate, since the theory that the murderer may have entered by the window on the third storey, to recall the fact that the ourang-outang which killed Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter in the Rue Morgue ascended from the street by means of a lightning-conductor, and swung himself into their apartment on a shutter. His master followed the animal. But let the great master word-painter complete the story:

"As the sailor looked in the gigantic animal had seized Madame L'Espanaye by the hair (which was loose, as she had been combing it) and was flourishing the razor about her face, in imitation of the motions of a barber. The daughter lay prostrate and motionless; she had swooned.

"The screams and struggles of the old lady (during which the hair was torn from her head) had the effect of changing the probably pacific purposes of the orang-outang into those of wrath. With one determined sweep of its muscular arm it nearly severed her head from her body. The sight of the blood inflamed its anger into frenzy. Gnashing its teeth and flashing fire from its eyes, it flew upon the body of the girl and embedded its fearful talons in her throat, retaining its grasp until she expired. Its wanderings and wild glances fell at this moment at the head of the bed, over which the face of its master, rigid with horror, was just discernible. The fury of the beast, who no doubt bore still in mind the dread whip, was instantly converted into fear. Conscious of having deserved punishment, it seemed desirous of concealing its bloody deeds, and skipped about the chamber in an agony of nervous agitation, throwing down and breaking the furniture as it roved, and dragging the bed from the bedstead. In conclusion it seized first the corpse of the daughter and thrust it up the chimney, as it was found; then that of the old lady, which it immediately hurled through the window headlong."

The brutal murder of Kate Voepel remains, so far as all the testimony discoverable can guide human reason, as devoid of motive as the slaughter of Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter in the Rue Morgue, and its record reads for all the world "like a page from Poe."

Leaves from Our Notebook.

A Chinese Solomon.

An unusual case, showing the fertility of resource and quickness of thought of the better class of Chinese is reported from Nanking. During the late Boxer rebellion a married Chinaman resident in that city joined a regiment which was ordered for service against the rebels. He did not return at the close of the struggle, and, nothing being heard of him, his wife, believing herself a widow, listened to the advances of another man who professed love for her, and who pressed his suit so ardently that she consented to join her lot with his.

They went before the proper authorities, were made husband and wife, and lived together in conjugal happiness, as they believed—at all events, they were happy. This continued for a year or two, when quite unexpectedly the first husband presented himself on the scene, alive and well, and demanded the restoration of his wife. "Oh, no," said No. 2; "you left her, remained away for years, nobody heard of you, she thought you dead, and mourned for you. We are married now, and here are the papers." No. 1, not having heard of the example of Enoch Arden probably, still clamoured for his wife, and it was ultimately decided to take the matter before the Chehsein.

The magistrate listened attentively to both sides, and appeared puzzled as to what course to take. The papers produced by the second husband were legal, but the first husband was obdurate and would not yield. At length the magistrate told them to leave the wife in his hands for ten days, and both to come back again for his decision. This was agreed to. About the fifth or sixth day the magistrate in great haste sent for the two men, and, with a mournful countenance, informed them that the wife had been suddenly smitten with an illness which had proved fatal, and that she was dead; and he asked the first husband whether he would take away the body and provide for the funeral. The man demurred, said he wanted a living wife, not a dead one, and should have nothing more to do with the matter. Turning to the other, the magistrate put the same question to him, saying that one of them must remove the body. The man said he was very poor, but the deceased had been a good wife to him; they had loved each other dearly, and, cost what it might, he would raise the money and pay for the burial. "Very well," said the magistrate, "then, there she is—take her away with you"; and, drawing aside a curtain, showed the astonished man the wife, standing, living and in good health, before them. It being clear that the first husband really cared nothing for her, she willingly abided by the magistrate's method of settling the complication.

The only drawback to this story is that we are unable to hand down to posterity the name of this Chinese Solomon.

Expectant.—We have always thought that the brutal murder of young Toner whose body was found in a reservoir, near Queen Elizabeth's Walk, Stoke Newington, one of the saddest cases within our knowledge. Yes, a woman was at the bottom of it—not the reservoir, but the case. We could a tale unfold etc., etc., if we were not bound by the police to secrecy, but the truth about this case, like that of Miss Camp, may yet be revealed.

Winifred Frost.—Tut! Tut! What should you know of such matters? The lines were:

"And this is the room where the murderer slept,
And oh! what a slumber that must have been—
The angels who watched him must have wept,
When they thought of the morrow's fearful scene!"

They were written by the usual local idiot, beg pardon, we mean poet, and appeared in a defunct Liverpool paper on the day following the inquest on Mrs. Henrickson. The case has been fully told here.

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